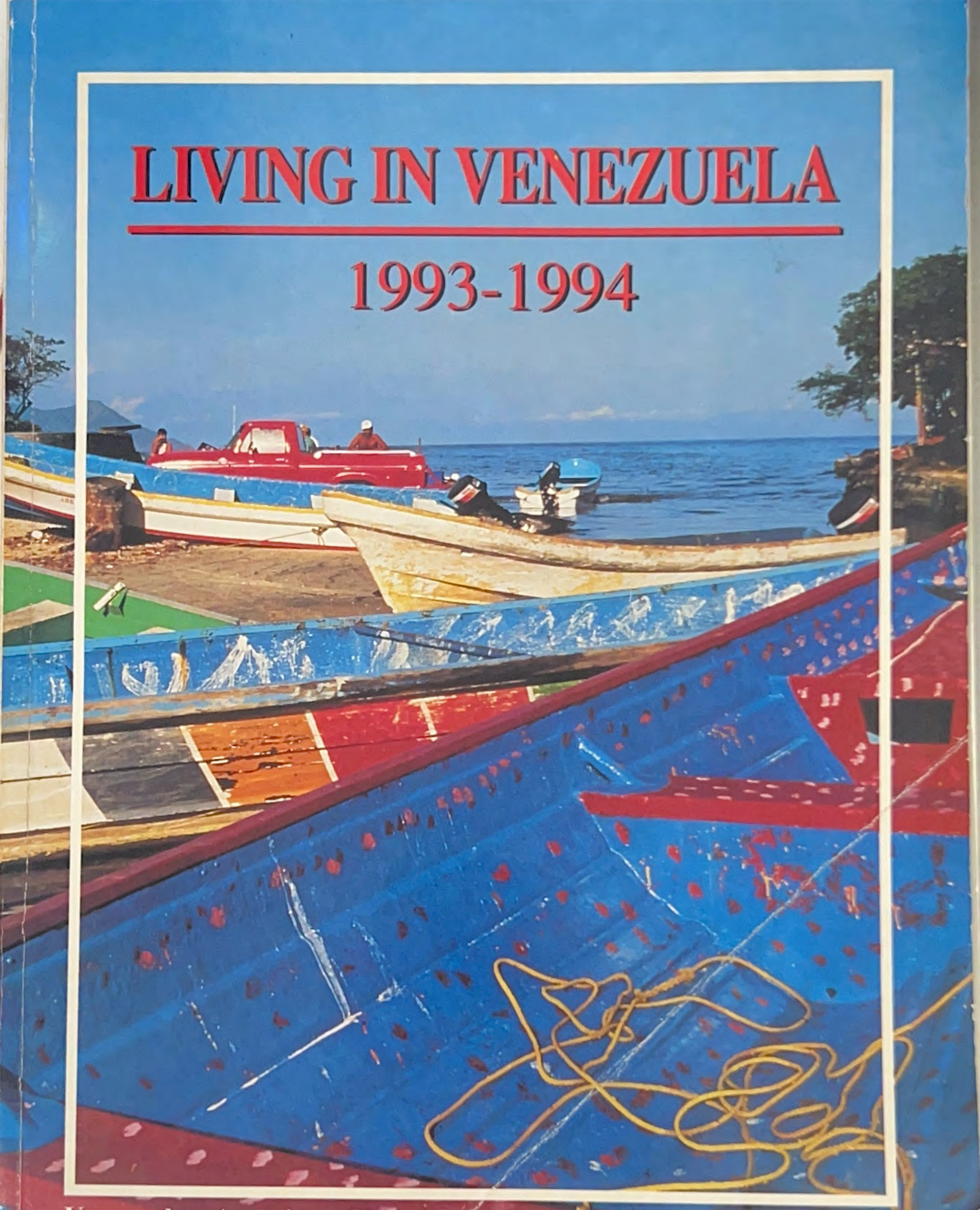
LIVING IN VENEZUELA

1993-1994



Venezuelan-American Chamber of Commerce and Industry $45

VIAJAR A COMO DE LUGAR.

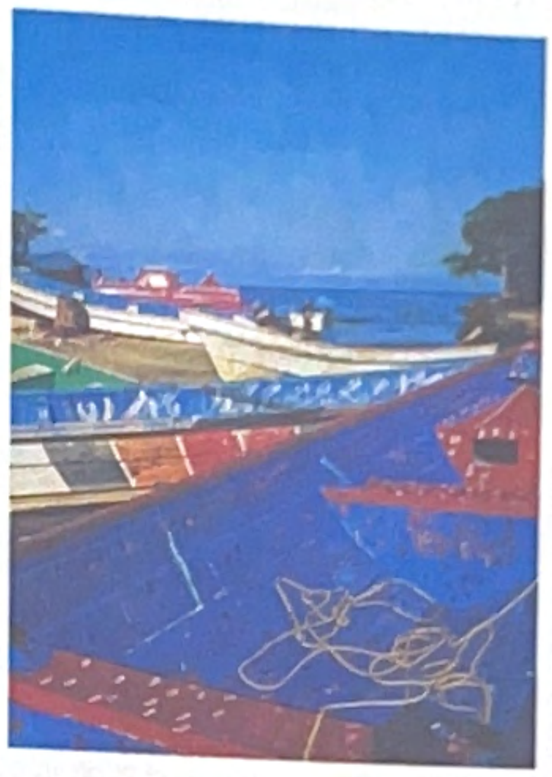
Pero no pierda la comodidad.

PARA VIAJAR A GUSTO

National
le da más!

LIVING IN VENEZUELA

1993-1994



Venezuelan-American Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Torre Credival, Piso 10 - Of. A, 2da. Avenida de Campo Alegre,
(near Avenida Francisco de Miranda), Campo Alegre
Mail: Apartado 5181, Caracas 1010-A, Telex: 23627 VACCI VC,
Telephone: 263.0833 (Master) Fax: 263.0586
CARACAS, VENEZUELA

Editor in Chief:	Antonio Herrera-Vaillant B.
Managing Editor:	Karen Krebsbach
Special Publications Editor:	Jane Knight
Writers:	Lucy Alton
	Elizabeth Kline
	John Wade
Contributor:	Mario Corvetto
Photographers:	Elizabeth Kline
	Karl Weidmann
Illustrators:	Jesús Muñoz (flora/fauna)
	José Luis Sanjuan (maps)
Art Director:	Christopher Wilcox
Production Coordinator:	Joseph M. Noble
Advertising Manager:	Cristina Bustos
Advertising Assistant:	Elena Rodríguez
Editorial Assistants:	Diana Carolina Morgado
	James Schneider
Business Manager:	Shalom Kivilevic
Printer:	Fanarte, C.A.
Cover Photo (Choroní):	Mario Corvetto
City Maps Courtesy of:	National Car Rental
	Auto Rental Carena, C.A.
Country Maps Courtesy of:	Corpoven

All rights reserved. Except for commercial advertisements, no part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Derechos reservados. Salvo para publicidad comercial, se prohibe la reproducción o transmisión, total o parcial, del contenido de este libro mediante cualquier medio, electrónico o mecánico, incluyendo fotocopia, grabación o cualquier sistema de almacenamiento de datos, sin autorización escrita de los editores.

Editors' Note: Prices included in this book were correct upon publication using the July 15 conversion rate of Bs.91 to the dollar. However, due to inflation, prices are subject to frequent increases. Similarly, telephone numbers are changing frequently, due to ongoing reorganization of the telephone network.

All listings are included at the recommendation of foreigners who have lived in Venezuela for at least several years. They are not meant to be complete, but should be used as a guide.

Abilene Akron Albany
Albuquerque Alexandría
Allentown Amarillo Anchorage
Asheville Atlanta Augusta Austin
Bakersfield Baltimore Baton Rouge
Beaumont/Port Arthur Birmingham
Bloomington Boston Buffalo
Burbank Burlington Carlsbad Cedar
Rapids Champaign Charleston Charlotte
Charlottesville Chattanooga Chicago Chico
Cincinnati Cleveland College Station Colorado
Springs Columbia Columbus (Mississippi)
Columbus (Georgia) Columbus (Ohio) Corpus
Christi Dallas/Fort Worth Dayton Daytona Beach
Decatur Denver Des Moines Detroit Dubuque El Paso
Eugene Eu /A Evansville Fairbanks Fayetteville
(Arkansas) Fay orth Carolina) Flint Fort Lauderdale
Fort Myers Fort Sm Walton Beach Fort Wayne Fresno
Grand R Gree Gr o Greenville (South
Carolina) Ca nnison Harlingen
Harrisburg H ord on Head H ulu uston Huntsville/
Decatur Idah ls In apolis L ern Jackson Hole
Jackson Jackso olina) rida) Kahului
Kalamazoo Kans y Key W ille amath Fa oxville La
Crosse Lafayette (I a) Lafayette is Lake Charl ke Tahoe
Lansing Laredo Las Vegas Lawton/Fort Sill Lexington Little Rock Long Beach
Longview Los Angeles Louisville Lubbock Madison Marathon Marquette
McAllen Melbourne Memphis Meridian Miami Midland/Odessa Milwaukee
Minneapolis/Saint Paul Mobile/Pascagoula Modesto Moline Monroe Monterrey
Montgomery Muskegon Myrtle Beach Naples Nashville New Bern New Orleans
New York Newark Newburgh Newport News/Williamsburg Norfolk/Virginia
Beach Oakland Oklahoma City Omaha Ontario Orange County Orlando
Owensboro Oxnard Paducah Palm Springs Pensacola Peoria Philadelphia Phoenix Pittsburgh Portland Providence
Raleigh/Durham Redding Reno Richmond Roanoke Rochester (Minnesota) Rochester (New York) Rockford
Sacramento Saint Louis Salt Lake City San Angelo San Antonio San Diego San Francisco San Jose San Luis
Obispo Santa Barbara Santa Maria Santa Rosa Sarasota/Bradenton Savannah Seattle Shreveport
Steamboat Springs South Bend Springfield (Illinois) Springfield (Missouri)) Stockton
Syracuse Talahassee Tampa Terre Haute Texarkana Toledo Traverse City
Tri City Tucson Tulsa Tupelo Tuscaloosa Tyler Vail Visalía
Waco Washington DC Waterloo Wausau/
Stevens Point West Palm Beach
Wichita Falls Wichita
Wilmington

American Airlines ofrece más vuelos a más ciudades de los Estados Unidos que cualquier otra línea aérea.

AmericanAirlines®
Todo es especial

AA-a-176 publicidad fornari

NUEVA ESPARTA
ZULIA
YARACUY
CARABOBO
DISTRITO FEDERAL
ARAGUA
SUCRE
FALCON
MIRANDA
LARA
TRUJILLO
COJEDES
PORTUGUESA
MONAGAS
GUARICO
MERIDA
BARINAS
ANZOATEGUI
DELTA AMACURO
TACHIRA
APURE
BOLIVAR
AREA IN DISPUTE
AMAZONAS
STATES OF VENEZUELA

VENEZUELA AT A GLANCE

OFFICIAL NAME: Republic of Venezuela

LOCATION: The northeast corner of South America, just above the equator, 0-12 º north and 60- 73º west. The Caribbean Sea acts as a northern boundary, with the Atlantic Ocean and the Republic of Guyana to the east, Brazil to the south, and Colombia to the west.

AREA: About 2.5 times the size of California, at 912,050 sq. kms.(352,150 sq. miles).

POPULATION: Official 1990 census - 19,455,429. Unofficial estimates, including illegal aliens, are 22 million.

CAPITAL: Caracas (official 1990 census: 2,784,042 people. Unofficial estimates: 4.5 million).

LANGUAGE: Spanish. English is taught as a mandatory second language in schools, and many high-level executives and professionals speak it fluently.

CLIMATE: Tropical, but temperatures vary considerably with altitude. The weather is cooler from November through February, particularly in the higher altitudes of the Andes and the Coastal Range. The hottest months are July and August.

Caracas temperatures: Average: 22º C (72º F)
March - October: 17ºC - 28ºC (62º F - 82º F)
November - February: 15ºC - 27ºC (59º F - 81ºF)

Maracaibo temperatures: Year round: 20ºC - 40ºC (68ºF - 104ºF)

Despite the temperature changes, the only real seasons in Venezuela are the rainy season (May to November) and the dry season (December through May). However, it sometimes rains heavily in the dry season as a result of polar air fronts coming down from the north, and the convergence of northeasterly and southeasterly trade winds.

GEOGRAPHICAL HIGHLIGHTS: The highest waterfall in the world: Angel Falls.
The largest lake in South America: Lake Maracaibo.
The third-largest river in South America: The Orinoco.
The highest aerial cable car in the world: Mérida.

GOVERNMENT: Venezuela consists of 22 states, one federal district, and 72 islands. The government is a representative democracy with these divisions of powers: Executive Branch, headed by the President, who is elected every five years, assisted by Cabinet Ministers; Legislative Branch, formed by two Chambers, of Senators and Deputies, elected every five years; and the Judicial Branch under a Supreme Court of Justice. The next presidential and legislative elections will be held in December 1993.

RELIGION: The majority of the people are Roman Catholic, although many different creeds are represented. There is separation of church and state, with complete freedom of worship.

CURRENCY: The monetary unit is the bolívar, which comes in paper denominations of Bs.1,000, Bs.500, Bs.100, Bs.50, Bs.20, Bs.10, and Bs.5. Coins include Bs.5, Bs.2, Bs.1, and 50 and 25 céntimos.

FLAG: Three horizontal stripes in yellow, blue, and red. The blue stripe contains a semicircle of seven white stars. The colors come from the banner flown by the leader of the region's independence movement, Simón Bolívar, with yellow to represent the country's natural wealth, blue for the Caribbean Sea surrounding Venezuela, and red for the bloodshed in the battle for independence. The stars represent the seven original provinces of Venezuela.

corpoven

FILIAL DE PDVSA

JUNTA DIRECTIVA

Presidente
Roberto V. Mandini

Vicepresidente
Claus H. Graf

Directores
Rubén D. Chirinos
Luis F. Masroua
Harry A. Michael E.
Carlos R. Omaña
José Vera S.

Director Laboral
Ramón Petit López

GERENCIA GENERAL DE ASUNTOS PUBLICOS

Gerente General
Antonieta M. de López

Gerente de Comunicaciones
Marcos Dietrich

Gerente de Relaciones Institucionales
Janet Benavente

Gerente de Planificación
Gustavo Dalence

Supervisora de Comunicaciones Internas
Enneida García R.

Supervisor de Comunicaciones Externas
Luis Enrique Caraballo

Supervisora de Publicidad
Beatriz García A.

DIRECCION

Edificio Petróleos de Venezuela, Torre Oeste, Avenida Libertador,
La Campiña, Caracas.
Dirección Postal: Corpoven, S.A. Apartado 61373, Caracas 1060-A, Venezuela.
Teléfono: 708.1111. Télex: 21363. Fax: 708.1646.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Gloria al bravo pueblo
que el yugo lanzó;
la ley respetando,
la virtud y honor.

Abajo cadenas,
abajo cadenas,
gritaba el Señor.
Y el pobre en su choza
libertad pidió.
Y a este santo nombre
tembló de pavor
el vil egoísmo
que otra vez triunfó.

Gritemos con brío,
gritemos con brío,
muera la opresión,
compatriotas fieles
la fuerza es unión.
Y desde el empíreo
el Supremo Autor
un sublime aliento
al pueblo infundió.

Unida con lazos,
unida con lazos,
que el cielo formó
la Ameerica toda
existe en nación.
Y si el despotismo
levanta la voz
seguid el ejemplo
que Caracas dió.

La Estrella Venezolana en el Firmamento

AVENSA

New York - Miami - Bogotá - Ciudad de México - Panamá - Aruba - Curazao - Bonaire - Quito - Lima.

CHAPTER I

ABOUT VENEZUELA

HISTORY IN BRIEF

It was not for a year after Europeans discovered the country that Venezuela was given its name, meaning " little Venice." Christopher Columbus, who discovered the New World, landed on the eastern coast in 1498. However, it was the Spaniard Alonso de Ojeda who named Venezuela on an exploratory voyage in 1499, when he was reminded of the Italian city upon seeing an Indian village built on stilts in Lake Maracaibo.

Although Spanish conquistadors laid the roots of the country's development, Venezuela's true history reaches back to the great migrations after the last Ice Age, some 10,000 years ago.

For thousands of years, dozens of different cultures with their own languages, religions and traditions occupied the different regions that make up present-day Venezuela. These peoples did not build empires as did the Aztecs, Mayans, or Incas; rather, their existence was semi-nomadic or agrarian.

The nature of the tribes differed as much as the regions they inhabited. There were the peaceful Arawaks who cultivated small fields, and there were the fierce Caribs who sought out their foes by canoe, later turning the bones of their conquered enemies into flutes.

Many of these tribes' intricate languages and cultures were destroyed, wiped from the annals of history by the advance of the Spanish into the New World. Some, such as the Guajiros of what is now modern-day Zulia, and the Piaroas in the Amazon, managed to survive the onslaught of the Europeans. But others were not so lucky: Tribes such as the Mixtecas, Goyones and Taironas disappeared forever.

Columbus was on his third voyage to the New World in 1498 when he was met by members of the Paria tribe in canoes near the Orinoco river. The explorer, reminded of the primary mission of his travels, was quick to note the tribes' jewelry of pearl and gold.

Initially, the New World was not providing the riches that Europeans had hoped for, and a wave of discontent swept through the European community. All this changed later when Hernán Cortés conquered Mexico in 1519, spawning a further invasion of Venezuela by gold-seeking Spaniards.

The region was explored and claimed as a Spanish colony during the 16th century, and over the next 300 years the Spanish crown consolidated its power. Conquistadors, adventurers, settlers, and missionaries fanned out across the territory, founding towns and cities. Spanish culture became solidly established in Venezuela, underscored with the creation of the Royal Pontifical University of Caracas in 1721.

PALMED PARADISE - On the beach at Cepe.

Photo: Mario Corvetto ©

Throughout the colonial period, coastal ports were subject to frequent attacks by French, Dutch and English pirates, despite official protection from the Spanish crown. In 1595, pirates even made their way to Caracas and sacked the city.

Conquistadors and pirates alike continued to hold an almost mythical belief in hidden riches in the earth of this newly conquered area. Sir Walter Raleigh's expedition to find the fabled city of gold, known as El Dorado, was just one of the many doomed journeys in search of treasure in Venezuela.

Rather, cacao was to become the cash crop that prompted an economic explosion after chocolate - the crop's byproduct - became the rave of Europe and the New World in the early 1700s. Soon, most Venezuelan plantations began focusing on growing cacao, and the Venezuelan aristocracy and its slave trade flourished. Aside from periodic raids by pirates, the 1700s were a period of peace and prosperity for Venezuela. The tranquility, however, was soon to be shattered.

A gradual movement towards independence from Spain gained momentum in the early 19th century as the winds of revolution swept throughout Latin America. The desire for political freedom had been building in Venezuela, particularly among the Creole aristocracy who resented the meddling of the Spanish government in local affairs. They were also inspired by the ideals of the French encyclopedists and by the theories of republicanism of such writers as Thomas Paine in his "Rights of Man." Both the French Revolution and American Revolution inspired Creole patriots to seek their own freedom. Ideology was one thing, but bold action was needed to set the continent aflame.

In 1806, Francisco de Miranda, a Venezuelan patriot, tried to land a small fleet at Ocumare de la Costa. He was driven back by the Spanish, but his attempt sparked a cry for independence that would grow and envelop Venezuela.

A revolutionary government *junta* was formed in 1810. It rejected the Spanish Captain General and refused to recognize the Courts of Cádiz, the governing body of the Spanish crown. A National Congress met the next year, and named Francisco de Miranda as Commander in Chief of the country. Finally, Venezuela's independence was declared on July 5, 1811, in what is now Plaza Bolívar, which ever since has been the historical heart of Caracas.

Caracas was leveled a year later by a massive earthquake, an event the Spanish claimed was an act of God against the dissenters. In the continuing struggle, Miranda was subsequently taken prisoner and sent to Spain, where he died in his jail cell. The quest for independence faltered briefly, but the revolt did not end. Instead, leadership of the Venezuelan freedom movement passed to the young aristocratic Simón Bolívar, who had been forced into exile with the patriot forces.

Born in Caracas to an aristocratic family, Bolívar was destined to become one of history's great military leaders and statesmen. As a young man, his only exceptional asset was that he would inherit one of Venezuela's most substantial fortunes from his *gran cacao* family. Educated and traveled, he was first exposed to the potential of an independent America while traveling in Europe as a teenager. The vision would consume his life, and he would leave behind a powerful legacy as "The Liberator" of Venezuela.

Originally part of the new republic's ambassadorial deputation to Great Britain, Bolívar joined the revolution at its lower levels shortly after the death of his wife, and he quickly rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the patriot forces.

His power began to grow after the 1812 capture of Francisco de Miranda. Bolívar and his

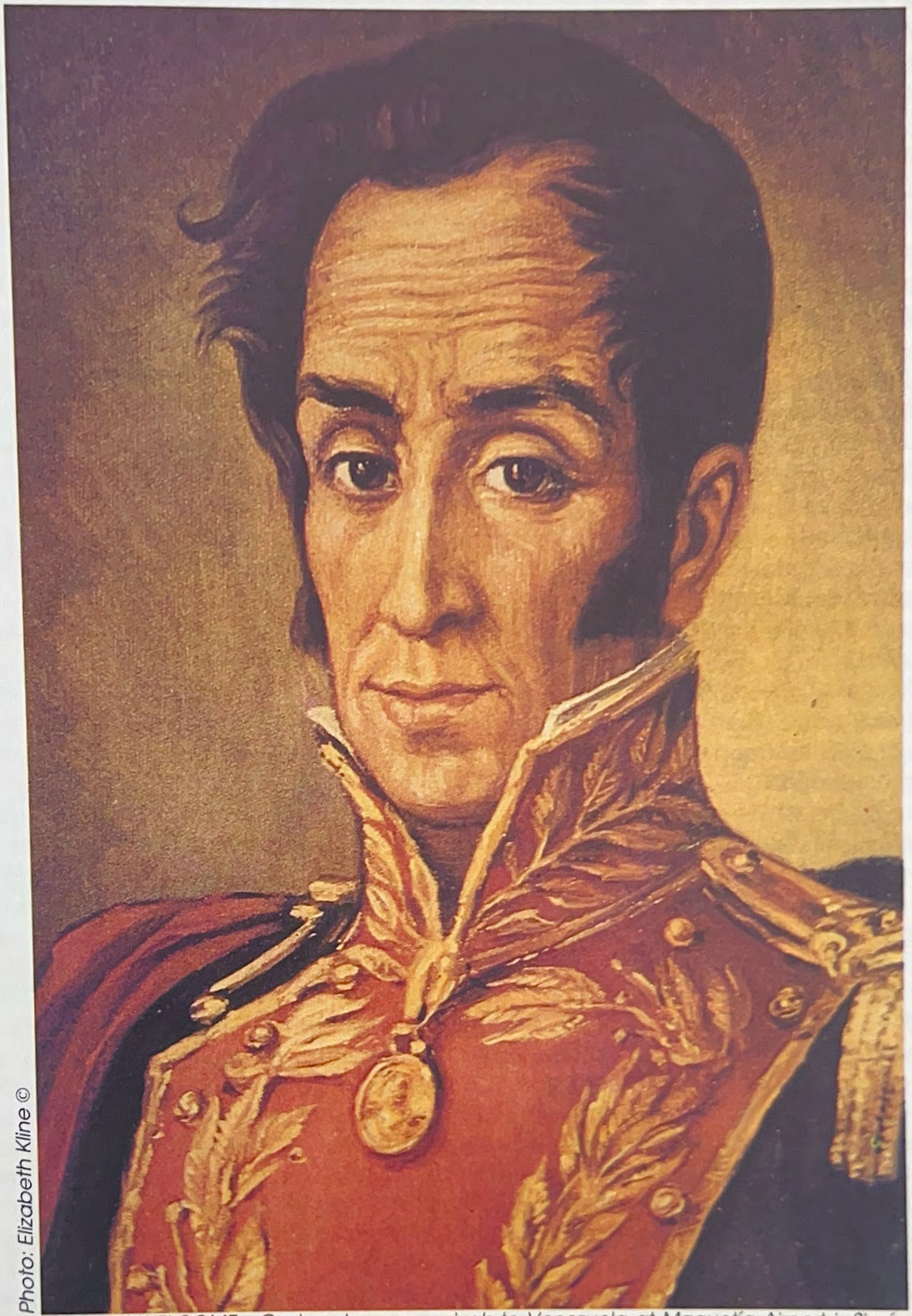


Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

FACE OF WELCOME - Gazing down on arrivals to Venezuela at Maquetía Airport is Simón Bolívar, The Liberator of South America, in a reproduction of a painting, by Ricardo Azevedo Bernal, of a portrait by Spanish painter J. Cortés.

patriots fought against the royalist forces; the resulting violence ravaged the land and uprooted the civilian population of the interior. In an attempt to consolidate forces, Bolívar forged an alliance with the *llaneros*, horsemen of the plains who, under the influence of the ruthless Spanish renegade, José Tomás Boves, had been terrorizing the countryside.

In 1813, he headed a larger, more organized struggle, pushing from the Andes Mountains toward the Caribbean Sea, a move that helped patriot forces recapture Caracas on Aug. 7, 1813. Upon his arrival, Bolívar was welcomed by cheering crowds and was appointed General of the Armies.

However, the tide soon turned against the general. Upon declaring the Second Republic, Bolívar attempted to force all mixed-blooded Venezuelans to carry certificates of race, a move that turned the *llaneros* against him, and prompted them to help push his forces out of Caracas. Bolívar and General Mariano were nearly wiped out by Spanish forces on June 15, 1814, and Bolívar fled the country once again, taking refuge in Jamaica. It was here that he issued his famous "Letter from Jamaica" in 1815.

After several additional attempts to recapture the mainland, Bolívar eventually set up the provisional government of Angostura (now Ciudad Bolívar), and established a transitory capital on the island of Margarita on May 8, 1817. Independence was finally assured with the Venezuelan victory at the Battle of Carabobo on June 24, 1821, followed in 1823 with the defeat of Spanish loyalist forces on Lake Maracaibo.

Immediately after the war, Gran Colombia - the countries of present-day Panama, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela - was created. However, Bolívar's dream of one large South American republic did not survive him, and the union dissolved in 1830. Venezuela left the union on May 6 of that year and named its revolutionary hero José Antonio Páez as its first president.

That year, Bolívar died at the age of 47, self-exiled in Santa Marta, Colombia, his body ravaged by tuberculosis. At the time of his death, after having been outlawed from Venezuela as a traitor, he had sunk into obscurity caused by mounting unpopularity after failing to keep Gran Colombia unified.

But his legacy lives on. Bolívar is considered to be the father of independence for the six present-day Latin American nations of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela. In Venezuela, he is revered as a national hero and his name graces everything from roads and towns to the nation's currency. Venezuela rightfully venerates his efforts for independence: Bolívar spent nearly a decade fighting royalist forces in a series of bitter, bloody campaigns, marked by extraordinary feats, as illustrated by his leading his ragged army across the Andes Mountains.

After the breakup of Gran Colombia, a tumultuous era of political unrest and strife ensued, characterized by power struggles among numerous *caudillos*, or leaders. Four Constitutions were enacted (1830, 1857, 1859, 1864) and one dictatorship followed another into the 20th century. Some of the leaders were ruthless, others more benevolent, but nearly all were ineffective in dealing with the country's needs and problems. The result was that Venezuela remained a largely rural fiefdom of successive dictatorships until the beginning of democracy in 1958, when Gen. Marcos Pérez Jiménez was overthrown after six years of rule.

The discovery of large deposits of oil or "black gold" in 1922 was a major force in changing the country's economic future. For 400 years, the black ooze that seeped out of Lake Maracaibo was nothing more than a curiosity, its primary use being to caulk the canoes of local indigenous peoples or the vessels of area pirates.

In December 1922, however, the Venezuelan subsidiary of Shell sunk a well near the

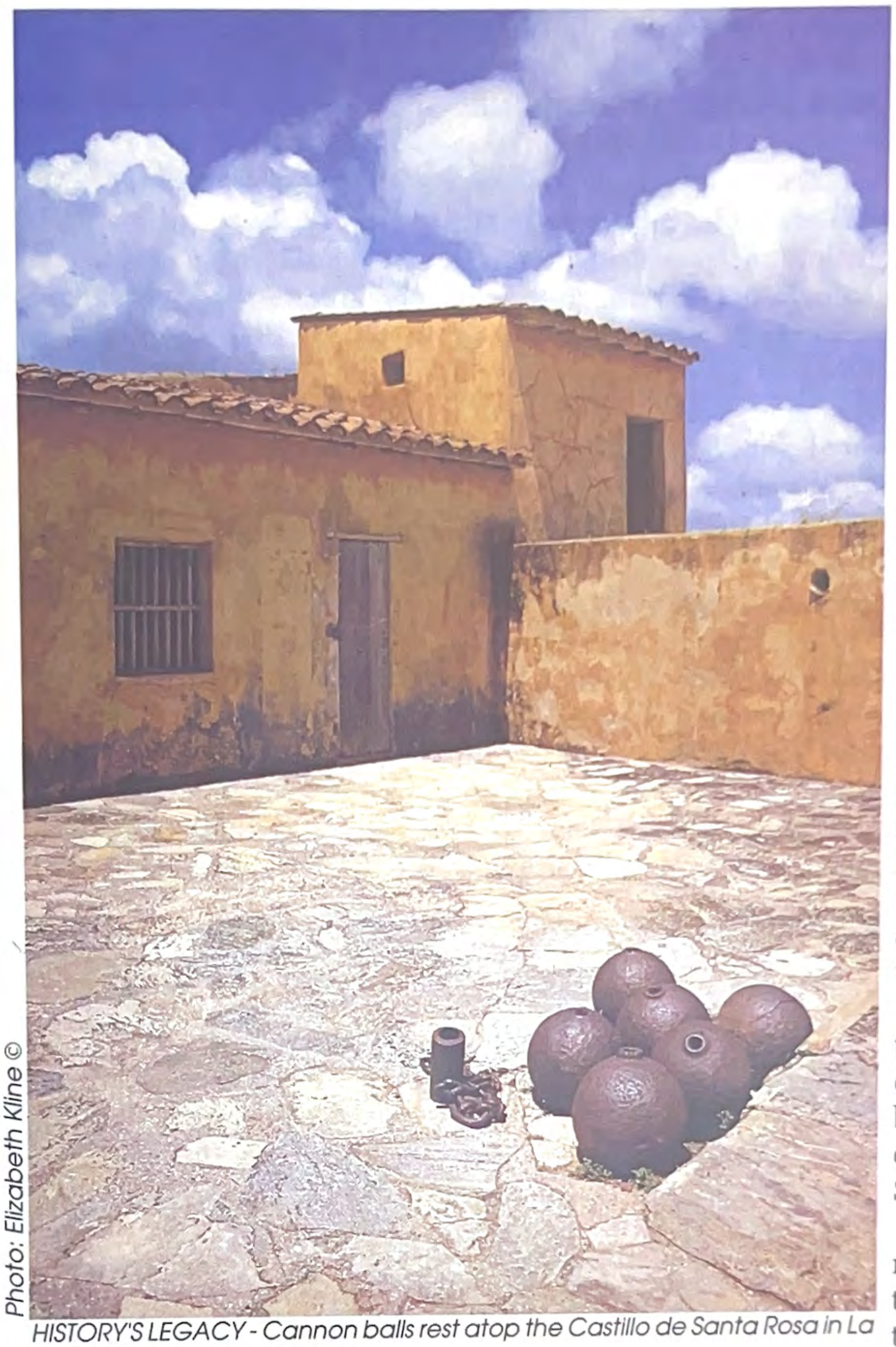


Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

HISTORY'S LEGACY - Cannon balls rest atop the Castillo de Santa Rosa in La Asunción, Margarita Island.

village of La Rosa on the lake's east side, striking a gusher on the first day of drilling. Speculation about Venezuela's potential oil reserves spawned immediate world headlines, and within two years, 73 different foreign entities were prospecting along the shores of the lake. Stimulated by tax concessions under the dictatorship of Juan Vicente Gómez, they found Venezuela's oil region to be a lucrative investment.

As foreign companies began entering the country on a massive scale, Venezuela had no choice but to develop its infrastructure. Housing, roads and port facilities were developed, and Maracaibo soon grew to a population of 75,000.

By 1927, Venezuela was the world's third-largest oil-producing nation, and by 1951, it had become second only to the United States.

Oil revenue brought modernization and wealth to Venezuela and sparked the development of the middle class. When world petroleum prices quadrupled in 1973, the gigantic boost in revenue enabled the government to embark on an ambitious program of national development. Venezuela nationalized its oil industry in 1976, providing further impetus to the government's desire for economic development.

However, the downward slide of oil prices beginning in 1982 halted the heady period of wealth, resulting in "Black Friday," when the bolívar was devalued from its fixed rate of Bs. 4.30 to the dollar. The real crisis did not come until 1989, when Carlos Andrés Pérez returned for a second presidential term and introduced a series of long-overdue reforms.

The country today stands as the world's eighth-largest oil producer, and continues to enjoy a huge income. Important social strides have been made, although poverty and social

problems have increased with the current recession. Nonetheless, Venezuela has one of the largest middle classes in Latin America.

The country's modern political history did not begin until the 1935 death of dictator Gen. Juan Vicente Gómez, who ruled for 27 years. Military successors gradually led the country toward democracy, though the process was accelerated by a coup d'etat in October 1945 that brought to power a civilian-military *junta*. Sweeping reforms were instituted, women were given the right to vote, and a constitutional president, the novelist Rómulo Gallegos, was elected.

However, the country's democratic transformation was interrupted for 10 years after a military coup overthrew the constitutional government in November 1948. Marcos Pérez Jiménez, who participated in the coup, eventually ruled Venezuela between 1952-58.

Present-day Venezuelan democracy came with the toppling of Pérez Jiménez's repressive dictatorship and the formation of a *junta* that called immediate free elections. Venezuela's first president elected by popular vote, Rómulo Betancourt, took the oath of office in 1959 and served a five-year term until 1964, when he handed the reins of power over to his duly elected successor, Raúl Leoni. Other peaceful transitions took place in 1969 when Rafael Caldera became president, followed in 1974 by Carlos Andrés Pérez, in 1979 by Luis Herrera Campíns, in 1984 by Jaime Lusinchi, and in 1989 when Pérez took over for a second term.

Venezuela has every reason to be proud of its democratic tradition. Not only have new governments been freely elected every five years since 1958, but in four of those elections, presidential power has changed hands from one political party to another.

In 1992, the country weathered two bloody military coup attempts, on Feb. 4 and Nov. 27, with government forces turning back disorganized rebels on both occasions. In December of that year, voters turned out at the polls for state and local elections, demonstrating their

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

HORSEBACK HERO - High on his horse sits Simón Bolívar in one of the squares named after him, in Mérida.

faith in the democratic system, if not in particular politicians.

On May 20, 1993, Pérez was indicted by the Supreme Court on corruption charges, the first time in Venezuelan history that the high court had voted to try a president while still in office. The Senate voted May 21 to suspend him from office, pending the outcome of his trial, and Congress elected Ramón José Velásquez, a respected historian and independent political figure, as Interim President in June. He is slated to serve until Peréz's term ends in February 1994.

PRESIDENTS OF VENEZUELA

1830-35	José Antonio Páez
1835-37	José María Vargas
1837-39	Carlos Soublette
1839-43	José Antonio Páez
1843-47	Carlos Soublette
1847-51	José Tadeo Monagas
1851-55	José Gregorio Monagas
1855-58	José Tadeo Monagas
1858-59	Julián Castro
1859	Pedro Gual
1860-61	Manuel Felipe Tovar
1861	Pedro Gual
1861-63	José Antonio Páez
1863-68	Juan Crisóstomo Falcón
1868	José Tadeo Monagas
1868-70	José Ruperto Monagas
1870-77	Antonio Guzmán Blanco
1877-78	Francisco Linares Alcántara
1878-79	Gregorio Cedeño
	Jacinto Gutiérrez
	José G. Valera
1879-84	Antonio Guzmán Blanco
1884-86	Joaquín Crespo
1886-90	J.P. Rojas Paúl
1890-92	Raimundo Andueza Palacios
1892-98	Joaquín Crespo
1898-99	Ignacio Andrade
1899-08	Cipriano Castro
1908-15	Juan Vicente Gómez
1915-22	Victorino Márquez B.
1922-29	Juan Vicente Gómez
1929-31	Juan Bautista Pérez
1931-35	Juan Vicente Gómez
1935-41	Eleazar López Contreras
1941-45	Isaías Medina Angarita
1945-47	Rómulo Betancourt
1947-48	Rómulo Gallegos
1948-50	Carlos Delgado Chalbaud
	Marcos Pérez Jiménez,
	L.F. Llovera Páez
1950-52	Germán Suárez Flamerich
1952-58	Marcos Pérez Jiménez
1958	W. Larrazábal-E. Sanabria
1959-64	Rómulo Betancourt
1964-69	Raúl Leoni
1969-74	Rafael Caldera
1974-79	Carlos Andrés Pérez
1979-84	Luis Herrera Campíns
1984-89	Jaime Lusinchi
1989-93	Carlos Andrés Pérez
1993	Ramón José Velásquez (Interim President)

POPULATION

The faces of Venezuela's people bear witness to the far-flung roots of their racial heritage. The multi-ethnic mixture found today is a result of the mingling of European, African, and native American cultures during the colonial period, the later addition of East Indian immigrants from Trinidad and other former British colonies in the Caribbean, and most recently, Chinese, Japanese and European immigrants.

About 65 percent of the population is of mixed European, African, and creole descent, termed *mestizo*. About 20 percent is Caucasian, 8 percent black and 7 percent Native American. The past 40 years have seen great new waves of Spanish, Italian, and Central European immigration, particularly in the decade following World War II. Attracted by the economic boom, people of all nationalities have flocked here to live either temporarily or permanently. A sizeable middle- and upper-class Cuban group settled here after President Fidel Castro took over in 1959.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Venezuela drew large numbers of immigrants from other Latin American nations. About half a million of Venezuela's current immigrant population is estimated to come from Argentina, Chile and Uruguay; another 400,000 are from Perú, Ecuador and Bolívia. As many as 1.5 million people have come from neighboring Colombia, many illegally.

Some 20,000 U.S. nationals live in Venezuela, according to figures released by the U.S. Embassy. There are also about 3,000 U.K. citizens here, 3,000 Canadians, and an Australian community of about 200 people. Among Caribbean English-language speakers living in the country are an estimated 16,000 Trinidadians and 200 Jamaicans.

The present economic recession, however, has prompted a decline of foreign immigration, especially of illegal aliens. However, Venezuela has a birthrate of around 3 percent and the population is expected to continue growing.

One half of the nation's population is under 18 years of age, and 75 percent is under the age of 35. Literacy is estimated at 89 percent for the population over age 10, and nearly 40 percent has completed secondary school.

Another area of social and economic concern is demographic imbalance. About 83 percent of the population is urban, living predominantly in the northern coastal region that includes Caracas, and only 17 percent lives in rural areas. Flight from the countryside to the cities has created serious overcrowding and housing shortages in urban areas, while large regions in the interior are virtually unpopulated.

GOVERNMENT

Venezuela is a democracy. The president is elected by the people, as Chief of State he holds most of the reins of power in his hands. He appoints all Cabinet members, who hold the titles of ministers.

The first move towards reducing presidential power was made in December 1989, when Venezuela held its first direct elections for state and local officials. Previously, state governors had been presidential appointees.

The presidential term is five years, and presidents may not be elected to two terms in a row, although they may later return to power.

Coinciding with the president's term of office is the five-year term of legislators, as congressional and presidential elections are held simultaneously. There are two houses of Congress - the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.

The next elections are scheduled for December of 1993. Two senators are elected from each state, while the number of deputies elected are determined by the state's population.

Some 50 percent of deputies in Congress are directly elected. The balance of the deputies, plus all senators, are elected by party slate. In the party slate method, the parties choose a list of candidates who are elected depending upon their place on the list and the number of total seats won by their party in the election..

The judicial branch is made up of a Supreme Court and a system of lower courts, with the legal system based on Napoleonic Law rather than on Common Law. A reform of the legal system is due to be carried out between 1993 and 1997 following a loan from the World Bank in 1992 to help finance the project.

Venezuela has two major political parties: The Social Christian Party (Copei) and the social democratic Acción Democrática (AD). Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) consolidated its position as third-ranking party in the 1989 local and state elections, in which the opposition and minor parties took several governorships from the ruling AD party. In the 1992 state and local elections, MAS, Causa R (Radical Cause) and independent candidates took a surprising number of offices, seen as a demonstration of the viability of direct elections and of voters' discontent with party politics.

Each of Venezuela's political parties has adopted a color which clearly identifies its propaganda and is used on ballots to distinguish a candidate's party affiliation. White is used by AD, Copei has green and MAS uses orange.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

GOLD LEAF GOVERNMENT - The nation's Capitol graces Plaza Bolívar in downtown Caracas.

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

CURRENCY	
Year-end 1992	Bs.79.68/1$
August 1993	Bs.91.00/1$
GDP (In constant 1984 prices)	Bs.566.6 billion
(1992 change vs. 1991)	+7.3%
PETROLEUM PRODUCTION (Barrels/day)	2.37 million b/d
(1992 change vs. 1991)	+0.0%
PETROLEUM EXPORTS (Barrels/day)	2.05 million b/d
(1992 change vs. 1991)	-3.3%
TOTAL GOVERNMENT INCOME (Excluding loans)	Bs.727.5 billion
(1992 change vs. 1991)	+4.7%
GOVERNMENT OIL INCOME	Bs.488.3 billion
(1992 change vs. 1991)	-12.2%
INTERNATIONAL RESERVES (Held by the Central Bank of Venezuela)	
Year-end 1992	$13.0 billion
(Change vs. 1991)	-7.8%
INFLATION RATE - 1992 year end	31.9%
(Estimate for 1993)	35 to 37%
FOREIGN DEBT (Government)	$27.24 billion
DEBT SERVICE (Government) - 1992	$2.43 billion
EXPORTS	$14.0 billion
(1992 change vs. 1991)	-5.9%
IMPORTS	$12.4 billion
(1992 change vs. 1991)	+22.8%
BALANCE OF TRADE (1992)	$1.6 billion
CURRENT ACCOUNTS BALANCE (1992)	-$3.7 billion
FOREIGN INVESTMENT	
Total accumulated direct foreign investment approved and registered by the Superintendency of Foreign Investment (Book value through year-end, 1992)	$4.9 billion
Foreign Investment Registered in 1992	$1.375 billion
U.S. Accumulated Direct Investment	$3.2 billion

(Figures do not include investments in the hydrocarbons, mining or financial sectors.)

UNEMPLOYMENT - (1992)	
Government estimate	8.0%

(Some 1992 figures are provisional.)

THE NATIONAL PICTURE

Venezuela is poised to make the most of its many advantages: A functioning democracy, a highly-profitable oil industry, and a wealth of natural resources. The country's democratic system emerged strengthened from the political turmoil triggered by the two military coup attempts of 1992 and initiatives are now being taken to stabilize the country's economic performance. National and international confidence was restored in mid-1993 by the smooth transition to an interim government to replace the administration of suspended President Carlos Andrés Pérez. Successful completion of presidential elections in December 1993 should set the stage for a new administration to consolidate the economic growth of recent years and to continue the ongoing modernization of Venezuela's political and social institutions.

Distribution of wealth in Venezuela remains uneven. Though the poor are somewhat better off than corresponding sectors in other Latin American countries, their numbers have increased and the middle class (about 25 percent of the population) have seen living standards drop in the face of recent austerity measures. Following the enviable economic growth of the oil-boom years of the 1970s, the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) remained stagnant during the early 1980s. The link between the bolívar and the U.S. dollar was broken in 1983 when a devaluation changed the Bs.4-$1 system for a multi-tiered system of exchange rates.

Faced with almost exhausted foreign reserves and record fiscal and balance-of-payments deficits, the second Pérez administration initiated an ambitious economic liberalization program in February, 1989: price controls were all but eliminated; interest rates were freed and are now set by market forces; the exchange rate was unified, set at Bs.40.50 and allowed to float; exchange controls were scrapped; non-tariff barriers eliminated and import tariffs were slashed; the maximum corporate tax rate was reduced from 50 percent to 30 percent; rules governing foreign investment were radically liberalized and a privatization program was started. During this time, 1989's sharp recession (-8.1 percent GDP) turned into sustained growth; 1990's GNP was 5.3 percent; 1991's GNP was 10.4 percent; 1992's GNP was 7.3 percent. In 1993, some GNP contraction is expected in the face of political and economic uncertainty in an electoral year. The bolívar continues to devalue gradually, though slower than inflation, and the possibility of renewed exchange controls is remote.

Venezuela's usually positive trade balance fluctuates in line with oil prices. Oil accounts for about 80 percent of total exports, but efforts to increase non-traditional exports are slowly beginning to take affect. Boosted by windfall oil income from the Persian Gulf crisis, in 1990 exports of $17.4 billion and imports of $6.8 billion produced a trade balance of $10.6 billion; as exports declined and imports increased, the balance narrowed to $4.7 billion in 1991 and $1.6 billion in 1992. In 1993, exports are expected to increase slightly to $14.5 billion and imports to fall to $12 billion, resulting in a $2.5 billion trade balance.

Entry into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and a gamut of regional free-trade agreements have been complemented by efforts to instill market principles in the domestic economy with legislation such as anti-monopoly, consumer protection and anti-dumping laws. Intellectual property protection is improving with the adoption of Andean Pact Decision 313 and reforms to national legislation are under way.

Current economic difficulties center on the runaway fiscal deficit (6.1 percent of GDP in 1992, with expectations to be about the same in 1993). Introduction of a sales tax and corporate assets tax, further privatizations, hikes in public service charges and government

budget cuts also are expected to stabilize public finances in the next few years.

Until the fiscal deficit is tackled, inflation will remain a problem. After a record 81 percent in 1989, the rate has settled in the low 30s: 36.5 percent in 1990; 31 percent in 1991; and 31.9 percent in 1992. Inflation in the 35-37 percent range is expected in 1993. Unemployment has fallen steadily to 8 percent at year-end 1992, although an estimated 40 percent of the working population is employed in the informal economy.

What does this overall picture mean for someone arriving to live and work in Venezuela? Services and quality control are not always up to developed-world standards; the telephone service, however, is steadily improving since privatization of the state telephone company in 1991. The city has gone from being one of the most expensive in the world, when the bolívar was dollar-linked, to being an attractive proposition for those on dollar salaries. One factor in the recent inflationary spiral is the so-called "dollarization" of the property market, putting house purchase and even apartment rental out of reach for many Venezuelans. While day-to-day expenses and items like public transportation, meals out in fine restaurants, and trips to the movies are still relatively cheap by U.S. standards, the newcomer to Venezuela must expect to pay dollar prices for apartment and house rental and for imported luxury goods.

Compared to most developing countries, Venezuela has much to offer: Most basic goods

Photo: Karl Weidmann©

CREATING A SPLASH - The Guri Dam is the world's most powerful hydroelectric generator, and is in the Guyana region.

and services are available as are many luxuries and quality health care - at a price. While economic hardship and poverty have increased, Venezuela is making a transition from a closed, oil-based economy to a market-oriented international player. The 1990s will tell whether the country can shrug off its mistakes of the past and realize its enormous potential.

THE OIL PICTURE

Venezuela is a rich country by Latin American standards; its per capita income is one of the highest in the region. However, despite attempts to diversify the economy, the country continues to be heavily dependent on petroleum. In 1992, oil accounted for 84 percent of exports, 70 percent of central government revenues and about 20 percent of GDP (1984 prices).

International oil prices have slumped since the Persian Gulf crisis. In 1992, Venezuela exported 2.05 million barrels of oil a day at an average price of $14.91 a barrel, earning $11.2 billion.

Venezuela has been a petroleum producer since 1914 but accelerated development of the industry did not begin until the 1920s. The country co-founded the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1960 with Saudi Arabia and Iraq. It did not, however, participate in the Arab oil embargo of 1973. During the Gulf crisis, Venezuela increased production to cover the shortfall in supply from Iraq and Kuwait within the context of a larger OPEC agreement.

The oil industry was nationalized in 1976. Since then, its operation has been businesslike, efficient and profitable. However, vast amounts of capital are required to upgrade declining production capacity, modernize refining processes and discover and develop new reserves. The current investment plan of the state oil company, Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA), aims to boost 1992 production capacity of 2.83 million barrels a day to 3.8 million by the year 2002.

Designed to strengthen the oil industry's position, PDVSA has now virtually completed an ambitious internationalization program started in the early 1980s. It has 50-50 joint ventures with Nynas Petroleum (Sweden), Veba Oel (Germany) and Uno-Ven (United States), among others. PDVSA is also the sole owner of Citgo Petroleum (after merging its former 50 percent share in Citgo (Louisiana) and Champlin Refining (Texas) and purchasing the remaining share of the companies). PDVSA holds third place in the rankings of world oil companies, is the United States' third-largest supplier of petroleum (after Saudi Arabia and Canada) and is the seventh-largest supplier of petroleum products in the U.S. market.

As Venezuela opens its economy, PDVSA is now looking to foreign investment to help finance and provide technology for its $37 billion, 10-year expansion plan: $14 billion of the total is expected to be private capital. By the year 2002, 600,000 barrels a day, or almost 16 percent of total production, could be in private hands.

Foreign capital has already re-entered the sector in the form of operating contracts in the first of two programs to reactivate marginal fields. Contracts in the second round were to be awarded in late 1993. Spearheading foreign involvement in the hydrocarbon sector are several megaprojects with estimated total investment of $10.5 billion that could increase national GDP by 4.4 percent in their construction stages.

These include two projects to develop the vast heavy crude reserves of the Orinoco Oil Belt: One is a $1.7 billion project between PDVSA affiliate Maraven and Conoco (United States); another a $3.1 billion project between PDVSA affiliate Maraven and a group of

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

DOWN UNDER - Oil rigs dig deep in Lake Maracaibo for Venezuela's most significant export.

international investors led by Japanese oil group Itochu-Marubeni; a third is the $5.6 billion Cristóbal Colón Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) project between PDVSA subsidiary Lagoven and Exxon, Shell and Mitsubishi. All projects are awaiting congressional approval under the 1975 Oil Nationalization Law and are expected to be passed in 1993. Once approved, production is due to start between 1998 and 2001.

In line with efforts to attract foreign investment, joint ventures in natural gas projects and petroleum extraction will now enjoy a reduced 30 percent tax rate. Other areas under PDVSA's wing, such as petrochemicals and coal, are also attracting strong private investment interest.

At year-end 1992, Venezuela's proven petroleum reserves stood at 62.5 billion barrels. This does not include the huge Orinoco Oil Belt, where an estimated 1.2 trillion barrels of extra-heavy oil are located, some 10 percent of which could be recovered using existing technology. Gas reserves are about 130 trillion cubic feet.

In another development of its extensive heavy crude reserves, PDVSA has developed Orimulsion, an innovative liquid boiler fuel that is gradually earning acceptance in international markets as a bitumen coal substitute in electric power plants. PDVSA subsidiary Bitor hopes to export 64 million metric tons (MT) a year by the year 2000, up from 1.75 million MT in 1992, with a $2 billion investment plan (1993-2000).

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

NATIONAL BEAUTY - The orchid, Venezuela's national flower, grows in a wide variety of colors.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Venezuela is a natural paradise for flora enthusiasts, with a large number of well-known exotic indoor plants sprouting up in abundance in the wild. Plants such as philodendrons, mother-in-law's tongue and crotons can all be seen growing along country roadsides.

The startling yellow flowers of the national tree, the *araguaney*, and many varieties of the -, the national flower, can be spotted.

Many orchids are epiphytes, growing on the upper branches of trees. Some of the ground-growing orchids can be found growing wild along roadsides. Although it becomes harder every year to find the more spectacular orchids in the wild due to plant poaching and habitat destruction, many commercially produced varieties are for sale year-round in garden supply stores. Bromeliads, likewise, are usually epiphytes and can be seen in myriad forms in the forests, jungles and parks of Venezuela.

At the end of the dry season and beginning of the rainy season, the mountainsides suddenly burst into bloom with a brilliant series of colors that change daily as the different species of trees flower one after the other.

Among the first to bloom is the *apamate* (pink poui), with colors that range from nearly purple, to rose, pink, lilac, or white. The ubiquitous *trinitaria* (bougainvillea), so called for the three bright sepals surrounding the true flower, is seen in many colors year-round, along with the poinsettia in bright red, pink or white. The *bucare*, with its bright orange blossoms, is planted as both an ornamental and as a shade tree in coffee plantations. A hillside covered with its orange blossoms means coffee was once grown beneath.

The coffee plant, with its red fruit and small fragrant white blossoms, is extensively cultivated in the mountainous regions of Venezuela. Cacao, the plant from which cocoa is made, features miniature blossoms that grow out of the trunk and branches of the tree. After the blossoms fall, pods the size of a small melon grow, which are full of the cacao seeds.

Another easily identifiable plant is the coconut palm along the coast, which is not native but is extensively planted in beach areas as a crop for its fruit, though beachgoers appreciate it for its shade. Sugar cane, bananas, plantains, mangos and oranges are also cultivated.

Although flora is abundant in color and variety, the country has not been quite so lucky with its fauna. Many of its larger animals are nearing extinction from overhunting, and those that do remain live in remote areas and are rarely seen. The big cats of Venezuela include the jaguar (locally called *tigre*), which has beautifully spotted fur, and the puma, which is of the same species as the North American mountain lion.

The country is, however, home to the world's largest rodent, the *chigüire* or capybara, which lives in the *llanos*. Here, it is still possible to find semi-wild herds in game preserves, along with river crocodiles, or *caimán*, freshwater dolphins, giant river otters, and other endangered species.

One mammal that can be seen even near Caracas is the three-toed sloth. At least one pair calls the trees of Plaza Bolívar in El Hatillo its permanent home.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

RODENTS ON THE RANGE - The world's largest rodent, the chigüire, roams freely in the llanos region.

Birds remain plentiful, their brightly-colored plumage evident on even the grayest of days. The primary flyway for both birds and insects migrating between North and South America is the Portachuelo pass through the mountains of the Henry Pittier National Park coast range, just north of Maracay. The country ranks as the fifth highest in the number of species sighted, with more than 1,300 species, including 300 types of hummingbird. Attempts at re-introducing the condor to the country are also being made, with five birds recently released in the Andes.

Wading birds can be seen all along the coast and around the water holes of the *llanos.* These include flamingo, scarlet ibis, roseate spoonbill and snowy egret - also seen in Caracas along the Guaire River.

Jungle birds include toucans and the many varieties of parrot, from small *pericos* to large *guacamayas.* Venezuela is also home to the harpy eagle, the largest member of the eagle family, and to the soldier crane, one of the heaviest flying birds. In the mountains, vultures can often be seen circling as they ride the thermal updrafts from the valleys below.

Just as the skies are filled with birds, so the waterways of Venezuela team with fish. Scuba diving and snorkeling, the best way to view the tropical fish and coral formations, is popular in the national parks of Morrocoy, Mochima and Los Roques. Freshwater stingrays, electric eels and fierce piranha are found in the southern rivers. The territorial waters support a thriving fishing industry serving the national as well as export markets .

As for reptiles, a wide variety of snakes including boas, anacondas, and the decorative but deadly coral snake live in Venezuela. Iguanas have been spotted in the busiest streets of Caracas as well as in more rural areas.

Venezuela contains many different ecosystems within its territory, from the glaciers high in the Andes to the dunes in Falcón state. More than half of the country is classified as national park or other kind of nature reserve.

The greatest threat to the spectacular natural beauty of the country is man's careless disregard for its preservation. In recent years, more attention has been given to safeguarding Venezuela's delicate ecological balance and curbing pollution in all its destructive forms. However, despite the growing awareness, there are still problems with governmental enforcement of various conservation and environmental laws.

GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS AND CLIMATE

Venezuela has a touch of almost every climate, from the cold of the snow-capped Andean peaks at 5,000 meters (16,000 feet), to the warm tropical nights on the beaches at sea level.

This large country neighboring Brazil, Colombia and Guyana, bordered by the Caribbean Sea to the north and the Atlantic to the east, covers a range of geographical regions. Desert lands, flat, dry plains, savannah and jungle all form part of its scenic diversity.

Temperatures vary considerably according to altitude. Below 800 meters, they range from 24º C to 40º C , (75º F to 104º F) while in zones from 800 to 2,000 meters, they go from 16º C to 33º C (61º F to 91º F). On the peaks of the Andean moutain, they fall to near or below 0ºC (32ºF).

Heavy, brief downpours and hot, humid temperatures are common during the rainy season (usually May to mid-November), followed by cloudless blue skies and slightly cooler temperatures during the dry season (December to May).

Geographically, the country can be broken down into six distinct regions:

COASTAL ZONE

(States of Carabobo, Aragua, Anzoátegui, Miranda, Sucre, Federal District and Nueva Esparta)

Running like a golden ribbon between the sea and the northern mountain chain are 230 kilometers (144 miles) of sandy, tropical beach, known as the Litoral.

This zone also incorporates the major cities of Valencia, Maracay, and the capital Caracas, nestled in a mountain valley at an altitude that creates a temperate climate. Caracas is 922 meters (2843 feet) above sea level and enjoys an average temperature of 22º C (72ºF) throughout the year. More than 44 percent of the country's population live in this bustling region, the nucleus of Venezuela, even though it represents only a little more than 8.5 percent of the national territory. Most of the nation's light industries and manufacturing are concentrated here.

Off the coast, like a string of pearls, are Venezuela's 72 Caribbean islands, including the state of Nueva Esparta, comprising the islands of Margarita, Coche and Cubagua.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

MAGIC OF MORROCOY - White, sandy beaches and aquamarine waters await visitors to Cayo Sal.

Photo: Karl Weidmann ©

SHIFTING SANDS - Desert dunes meet lush landscape in Falcón state.

NORTHWESTERN REGION

(States of Lara, Falcón and Yaracuy)

Shifting sand dunes stretch right to the edge of lush, green landscape in the state of Falcón. Known as the *médanos,* the dunes resemble a miniature Sahara Desert and make up part of the extensive arid zone which merges with lush, verdant areas in both Lara and Falcón states. Yaracuy, by contrast, is a fertile state, noted for its diversified livestock and agricultural produce. These three states are located to the north of the *llanos*, or plains, to the east of Lake Maracaibo and west of the city of Valencia.

Barquisimeto, Venezuela's fifth-largest urban center and the capital of Lara state, is a region of booming industrial growth and commercial activity. Lara is also known for its traditional music. *Tamunango* drums and the *cuatro* (a four-stringed instrument similar to the ukelele) are featured during such popular festivals as El Tamunangue, held on St. Anthony's Day on June 13.

Two giant oil refineries are on Falcón's coast, which serves as a major outlet for the petroleum industry. Nevertheless, much of the state's coastline offers unspoiled, safe beaches. Coro, capital of Falcón, is the oldest city in Venezuela, founded in 1527. It is a town beloved for its Spanish colonial atmosphere, Dutch-influenced architecture, and white-washed colonial churches.

STATE OF ZULIA

The northwest state of Zulia, flat, hot, and humid, encircles Lake Maracaibo like a horseshoe. Some 213 km. long (133 miles) and 115 km. wide (72 miles), the largest lake in South America is spanned by the world's longest pre-stressed concrete bridge and is covered by a forest of oil rigs which pump a major portion of Venezuela's petroleum. The exploitation of Lake Maracaibo's enormous petroleum reserves makes the region of vital importance. The government has also begun to develop the area's massive coal reserves west of Maracaibo for export.

Zulia is Venezuela's most populated state, with about 12 percent of the nation's population. The state is also one of the major centers of Venezuela's cattle and dairy industries. Sorghum and other feed grains are the main crops.

As well as being rich in oil, livestock, and agriculture, Zulia is rich in folklore. The Feria de la Chiquinquirá (Nov. 12-18) is a favorite festival among Venezuelans. A month later, at Christmas time, the *gaita* musicians can be heard singing their colorful, often irreverent and piquant songs in the streets.

The brilliantly-colored handicrafts of the Guajiro Indians of the region are very popular: hand-woven tapestries, long flowing dresses called *mantas*, and *alpargatas* (sandals) with giant pompons.

Nights in the southwestern part of the state are illuminated by repeated silent flashes of lightning, an electrical phenomenon originating at the mouth of the Catatumbo River.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

VISIONS OF VENICE - Typical Indian dwellings on stilts in Lake Maracaibo reminded early explorers of Venice.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

LOOKING UP - Twin lagoons dubbed the Eyeglasses gaze up at Pico Bolívar, the highest mountain in Venezuela.

THE ANDES

(States of Táchira, Mérida, Trujillo)

Looming south of Lake Maracaibo is Venezuela's share of South America's giant, the Andes, a mighty mountain range that runs 7,000 km (4,500 miles) down the length of the continent. Stately peaks, which are perpetually snow covered, tower over silent, glassy lakes and trout-swollen streams. The *páramos,* or high mountain plateaus, lie carpeted with bright yellow *frailejones,* Venezuela's edelweiss.

This is a land of fertile soil, rich in coffee plantations, though the entire area suffers from serious erosion problems. Its small towns, tucked away in valleys, jealously guard the region's traditions, handicrafts and music. Some of the many souvenirs originating from this area include brightly-colored pottery gifts, and woolen hats, scarves, rugs and bags.

From the city of Mérida, the world's longest (12.5 km or 7.5 miles) and highest (4.765 meters or 15,724 feet) cable car climbs to Pico Espejo and allows a closer view of Pico Bolívar, Venezuela's highest summit, which rises majestically to 5,007 meters (16,411 feet).

THE PLAINS REGION

(States of Barinas, Apure, Portugesa, Cojedes, Guárico, Monagas, Anzóategui)

The Llanos, or lowland plains or flat grasslands, cover almost 26 percent of Venezuelan territory, including sections of seven states. Receiving little rain during the dry season but prone to flooding during the rainy season, the plains extend from the Colombian border across to the Gulf of Paria.

A large swath of the southwestern part of Venezuela, known specifically as Los Llanos, is at the basin of the Orinoco River, South America's third longest, at 2,150 km. (1.345 miles). Despite the vastness of Los Llanos, only 16.5 percent of the nation's population lives there. Instead, these plains provide grazing for more than half of the country's herds of cattle, with fodder as the principal crop.

Los Llanos is a region of colorful customs and hand-crafted instruments and is the heartland of the national dance, the *joropo*, performed to the distinctive rhythms and melodies of the *cuatro*, harp and maracas, known worldwide as *música venezolana*.

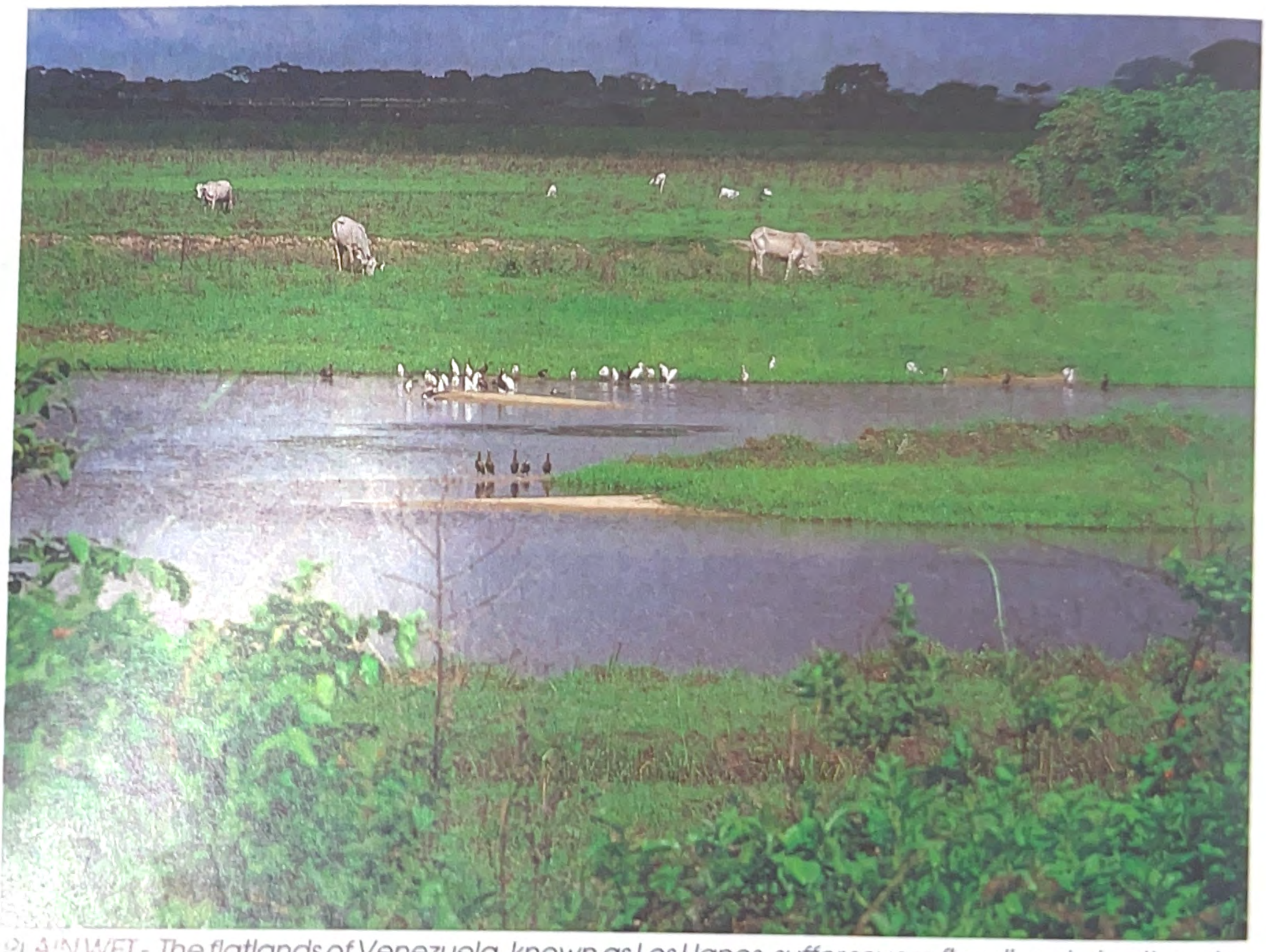


Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

PLAIN WET - The flatlands of Venezuela, known as Los Llanos, suffer severe flooding during the rainy season.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

CASCADE IN CANAIMA - Rivers and waterfalls are abundant in Canaima, overshadowed by the large rock formations known as tepuys.

THE GUAYANA REGION

(States of Amazonas, Delta Amacuro and Bolívar)

The jungle, the Amazon Basin, and the world's highest waterfall make this partially unexplored region to the south and east of the Orinoco River one of the most enticing in Venezuela. The Guayana region, so named because it sits on the Guayana shield, makes up half of the nation's territory. Yet it contains only 5 percent of its population, including scattered native tribes in the Amazon jungle.

For the visitor, Guayana's most fascinating lure is the Angel Falls, the highest waterfall in the world, with a drop of 964 meters (3,212 feet). Located in Canaima National Park, it is among a network of waterfalls, lagoons and luxuriant forests. Within the same park is the Gran Sabana, graced with table-top plateaus called *tepuys* and dense scrub growth, where jaguar lurk and heron wing their way across the skies.

Guayana is home to the 10-million kilowatt Guri Dam, which cost $5 billion and took 23 years to build and ranks as the world's most powerful. Bolívar State has vast mineral, hydro and timber resources which are still largely untapped, including the small part of the Orinoco Oil Belt in Guayana. This belt has the largest deposits of heavy petroleum in the world.

Contiguous with Bolívar state, Delta Amacuro state is a sparsely populated and largely undeveloped region in the northeast corner of Venezuela. Its dominant geographical feature is the delta, formed by the Orinoco and Amacuro Rivers as they feed into the Atlantic.

A huge expanse of dense, unexplored and mysterious rain forest is found in Amazonas, which stretches south of Bolívar state almost to the equator. While there is reason to suspect that this region is rich in natural resources, the extent of that wealth remains unknown.

CHAPTER II

GETTING THERE

LEAVING FOR VENEZUELA

Venezuela is accessible by land via Mexico on the Panamerican Highway but generally visitors moving to the country arrive by air. There are several Venezuelan, American and European airlines serving the country. An increasing number of visitors also arrive by boat.

AIR

CARRIERS AND ROUTES

Venezuela is well-served by international airlines, with direct links to major U.S. and European cities. It is also connected to all important cities in Latin America and to Caribbean destinations.

The country has five local airlines - Aeropostal, Avensa, Servivensa, Viasa, and Zuliana de Aviación. Viasa, the oldest and largest, flies to more than 25 cities in North America, South America and Europe. Avensa, Aeropostal, Servivensa, and Zuliana de Aviación serve some 40 cities in the country, including such regional centers as Barcelona, Barinas, Barquisimeto, Maracaibo, Maturín, Porlamar, Puerto Ordaz, San Fernando, San Cristóbal, and Valencia.

Direct flights to Miami and New York are available through both Viasa, which also flies direct to Houston, and Avensa, as well as American Airlines and United Airlines, the two U.S. carriers currently operating in Venezuela. American also flies to other major U.S. and European cities via San Juan, Puerto Rico. Atlanta and Orlando are served by Aeropostal and Zuliana de Aviación, and Servivensa flies to Miami.

Major European international airlines flying to Caracas include British Airways, Air France, Alitalia, Iberia, KLM, Lufthansa, and TAP (Air Portugal). Alitalia and TAP are widely recognized as having the most economical fares. However, the current price war between the large carriers means considerable savings can be made by flying via, for example, Puerto Rico.

Changes in flight schedules are relatively common so it is important to talk to a knowledgeable travel agent to be current on schedules and fares.

There are two flight schedule periods per year, one starting in April and the other in October, with the exact date of the schedule change depending on the airline in question. Although the changeover from one schedule to the other does not greatly affect the number

ONE MORE MOUNTAIN - Spanish moss frames the Andes mountain range.

© Jean Convetto

of flights offered, departure and arrival times may vary. Extra flights are offered to many destinations during the heavy summer vacation, Easter week, and Christmas travel periods.

Flight tariffs to the United States are re-set once a year in March or April. For Europe, high-season fares range from June 1 to Sept. 14.

Excursion rates can represent a substantial saving for the traveler who complies with the ruling on the minimum and maximum number of days allowed. Excursion rates for travel to the United States set a minimum stay of seven days and a maximum of 21 days; to Europe and the Middle East, the requirement is 14 days minimum and 45 days maximum; to the Caribbean, it is 14 days minimum and 21 days maximum.

ARRIVALS

Visitors coming to Caracas from overseas will fly to Simón Bolívar International Airport (Maiquetía) on the Caribbean coast, 28 km. (17 miles) from the city. Adjacent to the international airport is a newer national airport, inaugurated in 1983.

Both are spacious, well-marked and easily negotiated, but officials do not allow arriving passengers to take luggage trolleys through the customs areas. Porters will carry bags between the two terminals for a tip - Bs.100 ($1.10) to Bs.200 ($2.20) per bag is recommended.

The Venezuelan Ministry of Tourism maintains an information office at the airport. Personnel provide maps and guidance and can arrange hotel reservation assistance for arriving passengers. However, it is generally advisable to book ahead, since Caracas has a shortage of good international hotels.

Aco, Avis, Budget, Hertz, and National car-rental agencies all operate counters at the airport, although per-day prices are considerably higher than in the United States.

TRANSIT

The journey from the airport, through several mountain tunnels and into the Caracas valley, can range from 30 minutes to more than two hours, depending on traffic. Delays are so common on the autopista to La Guaira and Maiquetía that it is vital to allow plenty of time, especially on the weekends or during peak travel periods such as Christmas, Carnival, Easter week, and summer holidays.

Taxis and private cars are the main means of transportation between the airport and the city, though visitors are advised to stop at the taxi booth at the airport for a pre-paid ticket, which guarantees the fare to specific destinations or zones of the city. Standard fares for travel are posted. However, fares to five-star hotels can be double the price of a location only a block away. For instance, a trip to central Caracas costs about Bs.800 ($8.80), but will cost Bs.1,500 ($16.48) to a top-class hotel. Returning to the airport, fares should be negotiated before departure.

Buses and mini-buses leave for central Caracas directly outside both airport terminals. At Bs.90 ($.98) one way, they are considerably less expensive than taxis, but do not generally run after 8:00 p.m. They stop near Metro stations at Gato Negro, La Hoyada and Belles Artes. For return to the airport, a constant flow of buses leaves from beneath the underpass near the Bellas Artes area. These do not leave until full, so an extra half hour should be allowed when calculating journey times.

Shuttle Express provides airport shuttle service from Parque Tolon (Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes between Avda. Valle Arriba and Calle New York) in Las Mercedes. The air-conditioned buses leave for the airport every hour from 4:15 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. One way costs

Bs.280 ($3.07). For the return trip, buses leave from the Aeropostal entrance on the upper level of the national terminal every 45 minutes or so. Shuttle Express can be reached at 993.5173 in Caracas, or using the cellular number 016-21.8317.

DEPARTURES

Flight confirmation is particularly important when traveling on a Venezuelan airline, since without it seats can be resold. Passengers on international flights leaving Caracas are obliged to reconfirm their reservations not less than 72 hours in advance, even when tickets are pre-paid. For national flights, the reconfirmation deadline is 24 hours before take-off.

Early arrival at the airport is particularly important, especially during peak periods. An official ruling requires that international passengers check in two hours before departure. Cut-off time for domestic flights is one hour before departure. International flights are closed one hour before take-off, and domestic flights 30 minutes before. If confirmed passengers do not arrive before the check-in deadline, airlines have the right to accept anyone flying standby.

A convenience for passengers traveling on Viasa is the early check-in service offered at its office in the CCCT. Morning check-in for flights leaving after 6:30 p.m. that day is from 7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Afternoon and evening check-in, for flights departing between 6:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. the following day, is from 3:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. However, passengers on Monday flights cannot use this service, since early check-in is offered no more than one day in advance and the office is closed Sundays.

A departure tax is levied on every passenger leaving Venezuela, at different rates for residents and non-residents. All Venezuelans and foreigners with transient and resident visas are required to pay an international exit and airport tax of Bs.1,200 ($13.19). Foreign tourists with a tourist card or tourist visa, children up to the age of 11, and diplomats pay Bs.830 ($9.12). All flights within Venezuela require a tax of Bs.40 ($.43) per person, except for Mérida, which is Bs.80 ($.87).

Depending on the airline, these taxes may be collected directly at the check-in counter, or passengers may be sent to a booth to pay the tax. Waiting in line to pay can take some time during peak airport periods. Many airlines accept payment in U.S. dollars.

The Caracas airport now boasts a machine which, for a small fee, covers luggage with a sheet of heavy-duty plastic to protect suitcases or bags from being tampered with by airport personnel or other travelers.

SEA

More than 80 percent of the country's imports and exports are handled by Venezuela's principal ports of La Guaira, Maracaibo and Puerto Cabello.

Ferryboat lines link Margarita with the mainland and connect Venezuela, from the port at Coro, with the islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao.

Caribbean holiday cruises, which leave from La Guaira, are very popular. These offer stops at places such as Puerto Rico, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Aruba, Jamaica, Grenada, Trinidad, Barbados, Nassau, Curaçao, St. Thomas and Miami. Since many Caribbean cruises originate in Miami, those who wish to travel to Venezuela by sea may take advantage of this transportation.

DOCUMENTATION

Obtaining and maintaining up-to-date documentation is one of the major headaches of living in Venezuela.

Within the country, it seems everyone is trying to obtain documents and that every official and every office has a different story regarding regulations. The result is that many people are not legally documented, while others resort to bribes. Advertisements offering help with documentation are often found in newspapers, and people who know the system wait outside the relevant offices ready to offer their services. The line between what is legal and what is not seems to be very fine. Generally speaking, it is permitted to pay someone to help with the paperwork, but it is illegal to bribe officials directly related with documentation to obtain preferential treatment.

Within the country, information on visas and identification cards, known as *cédulas*, can be obtained from the main office of the Dirección Nacional de Identificación y Extranjería (DIEX), Edif. Identificación, Plaza Miranda, El Silencio, Caracas (Tel.: 483.3433, weekdays 8:00 a.m. - noon and 1:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.). However, waiting lines at the DIEX can be formidable, and even early arrivals may have to spend the day there. Passports often have to be left overnight.

Most travel agencies in Venezuela have experience in dealing with the DIEX, and can provide the necessary forms and assistance with applications for visa renewal, visa changes and *cédulas* for a charge worth paying for the time and bother saved.

Outside Venezuela, the Venezuelan consulate or embassy in various cities should be consulted. Each consulate office has a certain amount of discretionary power and may have its own requirements in addition to the standard ones, often due to conditions in the host country.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for health and vaccination certification are at the discretion of the consul issuing the visa. In general, neither is required for a tourist visa although proof of yellow fever and cholera vaccination may be required for people entering the country overland. Applicants for transient visas are required to have a medical examination by a doctor appointed by the consulate (see below).

Although vaccination may not be required, some injections are recommended by doctors. Typhoid, polio and tetanus shots should be up to date. Cholera exists in Venezuela, but injections only give partial immunity. The risk of infectious hepatitis may be reduced by gamma globulin shots.

Malaria prevention tablets are recommended for some areas but not in Caracas. Malaria risk exists year round in rural districts less than 600 meters (1,135 feet) above sea level in parts of Amazonas, Apure, Bolívar, Barinas, Mérida, Táchira, and Zulia states. Yellow fever vaccination is recommended for those intending to live in Amazonas.

VISAS

TOURIST CARDS AND TOURIST VISAS

These should be applied for only by individuals visiting Venezuela as tourists. Those holding tourist documentation are forbidden by law from engaging in any business activity,

Canon COLOR COPY SHOP

NUESTROS CENTROS DE COPIADO Canon

en el C.C.C.T. en el Centro Plaza y en Parque Central

con las mejores copias en blanco y negro
Y LAS INSUPERABLES FOTOCOPIAS A FULL COLOR
(CAMBIOS DE COLOR, DESIGNACION DE AREAS, AISLADO, BORRADO, REPETICION, CONTORNO)

y ahora presentamos las nuevas y únicas en Venezuela

Copias TAMAÑO AFICHE o POSTER 60 X 90 cms
y más grande aún

TAMBIEN A FULL COLOR Y AL INSTANTE: UD. PUEDE AMPLIAR HASTA UN 1.200 %
En Papel Fílmico Abrillantado o en Papel especial Mate, la Calidad le impresionará...

ADEMAS FUNCIONA EL..

CENTRO DE Auto-Edición Canon

Donde ponemos a su servicio nuestro sistema de impresiones láser a Full Color y con resolución de 400 dpi.

Aquí, podrá usted imprimir
el contenido de cualquier diskette,
bien sea de Macintosh
como de IBM o PC Compatible

también podemos hacerle el trabajo gráfico que usted desee

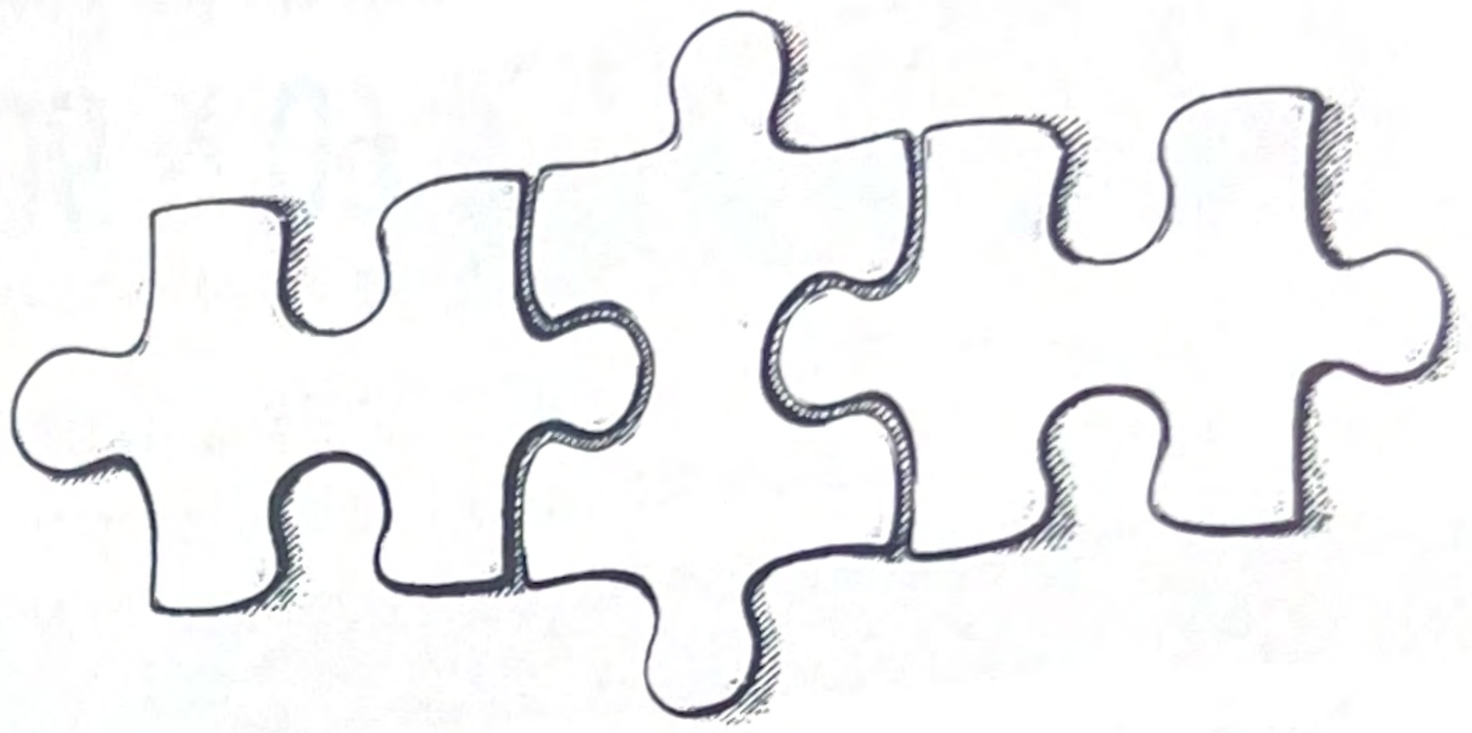
VENGA Y PREGUNTE SOBRE NUESTRAS POSIBILIDADES

C.C.C.T.
Segunda Etapa • Nivel PB
(Frente Ascensores Torre A)
Tlfs: 959.0559 • 2965 • 1861 • 3591
Fax: 959.1291

Centro Plaza
Nivel Jardín 3 • Local CC3-70
Los Palos Grandes
Tlfs/Fax: 284.1778 • 285.8923

Parque Central
Local Nº CB-17 • Nivel Bolívar
Torre El Tejar
Tlfs: 576.2753 • 0435 • 5674
1185 • 573.6064

Canon TECNOLOGIA Y SERVICIO PARA GANAR



SOCIEDAD ILIMITADA

Esta es una forma análoga de describir parte de nuestra filosofía de trabajo en el Departamento de Servicios al Cliente. Comunicarnos bidireccionalmente, trabajar en un solo equipo Cliente-Agencia para conseguir la mejor publicidad, la que se adapta a cada consumidor, a cada mercado. Utilizando métodos como el GIM (Grupo Integrado de la Marca) con el cual todos los departamentos - Servicios al Cliente, Creación, Medios, Planeamiento Estratégico... - piensan y trabajan al unísono en búsqueda de la mejor publicidad del mercado.

En pocas palabras, Cliente y Agencia convertidos en socios activos para un objetivo común: una creatividad ilimitada, una creatividad orientada a resultados.

LA VERDAD BIEN DICHA

McCANN-ERICKSON

Su socio en creatividad ilimitada

such as the signing of any legal or commerical contract. Tourist cards are initially valid for 60 days and are normally issued by airlines and passenger-carrying shipping companies, either upon purchase of the ticket, boarding, or during the flight. Alternatively, they can be obtained from a desk near the immigration checkpoint.

Tourist visas are valid for up to one year and are issued at a Venezuelan embassy or consulate abroad. Requirements for both are a valid passport, with minimum validity of one year, and a return ticket by air or ship. If only a one-way ticket is purchased, the passenger may be required to have a bank letter giving proof of funds. Both tourist cards and tourist visas must be used within 60 days of issue and can be renewed to allow three entries into the country during their validity.

Airlines serving Venezuela may issue tourist cards to nationals of the following countries: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, the Dutch Antilles, New Zealand, Norway, San Marino, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. Nationals of other countries should consult the Venezuelan consulate in their country of origin.

Renewal

Most nationalities are restricted to a maximum of three tourist cards or visas in one year. Although the effort involved in renewing tourist documentation is considerable, it is important, as checks are made both at airports and periodically at road checkpoints. Good travel agents can arrange for renewal for a small fee.

Renewal requirements are a valid passport, minimum validity of one year, with old tourist visa or tourist card; a return, or ongoing, airline or shipping company ticket; two 4x4 cm. photos, front-face; Bs.1,005 ($11.04) in fiscal stamps on the application form for each additional 30 days requested; and a letter from someone saying that you are staying with him and that he guarantees your financial support.

TRANSIENT VISAS

Transient visas are needed for anyone planning to work in Venezuela, even for short periods. They can usually only be obtained outside the country, and tourists wishing to change from a tourist visa to a transient visa technically have to travel out of the country to obtain their papers from a Venezuelan consulate. Because of the delays involved in obtaining papers, visitors wishing to remain in Venezuela for some time often arrive in the country with tourist cards, converting to transient visas by leaving and re-entering the country once their papers are ready.

A U.S. national who is married to a Venezuelan can receive a transient visa by presenting their certified marriage license at the appropriate Venezuelan consulate in the United States. There is no charge for this service.

There are two types of transient visa - the business visa which allows short-term business interests to be pursued, and the regular transient visa.

BUSINESS/TRANSIENT VISAS

Issued exclusively at Venezuelan consulates, these visas, also called *transeunte de negocio,* are valid for either 120 days or one year from date of arrival at the discretion of the issuing consul, and are not renewable in Venezuela.

The requirements include a valid passport with a minimum validity of one year; four 4x4 cm. photos, front-face with name on the back; and a commercial reason for visiting Venezuela, such as to look into business possibilities for a company, to check out a job that has been offered, or to sell products or services from outside Venezuela.

This visa allows the holder to engage in business and to sign commercial contracts except those for which a *cédula* or National Identity Card is required.

Before leaving Venezuela, holders of this visa must show proof that their company has paid the income witholding tax at 20 percent for time spent in the country.

REGULAR TRANSIENT VISA

This visa is valid for one year and must be applied for in Venezuela by a third party at the national identification office (DIEX) using a request for entry, or *solicitud de ingreso*. Once the application has been approved, an authorization cable can be sent to the Venezuelan consulate designated by the person for whom the visa is being sought. These visas can be obtained by a company for a member of its staff, or by an individual seeking to bring a child or spouse to Venezuela.

Requirements:

A) When the company requests the transient visa:

Companies must first receive permission from the Labor Ministry (Ministerio de Trabajo) to bring in the employee, and must justify the hire with a letter of Exposición de Motivos.

The company must supply the following information and documents:

- Application form (Solicitud de Ingreso).
- Company details: full name and address; date of commencement of operations in Venezuela; photocopy of company statutes as published in the Gaceta Oficial (Venezuelan Government Gazette); photocopy of last income tax declaration and of corresponding receipt; photocopy of the company's *solvencia*; and full name, photocopy of *cédula*, position and nationality of the person who will sign the request in the name of the company.
- Proposed work contract, to be signed once the employee is in Venezuela and in possession of a one-year transient visa. This must be notarized in Venezuela and signed by a company official.
- Personal details of the individual and family members requiring visas: two front and profile photographs (4x4 cm.), with names on the back; full name according to passport, nationality, age and civil status; and residence or office address where the visa will be picked up.
- Family details: For the spouse, the marriage certificate legalized by the Venezuelan consul with jurisdiction where the marriage was performed. If the spouse does not hold the same nationality as the person hired, his/her birth certificate must be legalized by the Venezuelan consul with jurisdiction in the place of origin; for children, birth certificates legalized by the Venezuelan consul with jurisdiction where the births occurred.
- Bs.1,005 ($11.05) in fiscal stamps on the application form.
- The location of the Venezuelan consulate where the visa is to be picked up by the applicant.

At the consulate, the applicant will be sent to a doctor for a medical examination. Some consulates also require a clearance from the police in cities where the applicant has resided for the last five years. Sometimes, financial or business references are also required. It is advisable to have children's school certificates and records notarized and legalized by the

Venezuelan consul with jurisdiction where the school is located, as this legalization may be required for admission to Venezuelan schools registered with the Ministry of Education.

B) Requirements when a person requests a transient visa in Venezuela, such as to bring a close relative into the country:

- Application form, or *solicitud de ingreso.*
- Details on the person making the request: his full name as it appears on the *cédula de identidad*, and the number of the *cédula*; address; nationality; present occupation; occupation on entering Venezuela; present status - transient or resident; length of time in Venezuela (in years); relationship to the person for whom the visa is being requested; civil status; if married, date and place of marriage, whether it was performed through power of attorney, whether the spouse is in Venezuela and *cédula* of spouse.
- A photocopy of the petitioner's last income tax declaration and of receipt of payment.
- A letter certifying the petitioner's employment and a photocopy of the *cédula* of the company officer signing the letter.
- Bs.1,005 ($11.05) in fiscal stamps on the application form.
- Details on person for whom the visa is being requested: see requirements above, under A.

Renewal

Transient visas must be renewed annually. To do so, one needs an application form (Solicitud de Prorroga); a valid passport (minimum 90 days' validity) containing a one-year visa nearing its expiration date; two photos (4x4 cm.), front face with name on back; a photocopy of the *cédula*; a photocopy of the *cédula* of the company officer signing the letter; Bs.1,005 ($11.05); and a letter certifying employment. This letter should be on company letterhead and the company's stamp should appear under the certifying signature. A similar letter will be necessary when applying for renewal of the visas of spouse and children.

RESIDENT VISA

Normally, five consecutive years in Venezuela as a transient are necessary before converting to a resident visa, although the DIEX officials have discretionary power to reduce this time period. Other requirements are the same as for the renewal of a transient visa.

The wife of a Venezuelan citizen is normally entitled to Venezuelan nationality but she has to give up her original nationality. The DIEX has not yet extended this privilege to the husbands of Venezuelan citizens. Children of Venezuelan citizens are normally entitled to Venezuelan nationality and in most cases can retain original nationality as well, until they reach 18 years of age.

VISA TRANSFERS

When a transient or resident visa holder's passport is filled up or expires and a new one is issued, the Venezuelan visa must be transferred into the new passport. This procedure is known as a *recuento de visa* and is performed at the DIEX.

Requirements include an application form (Solicitud de Recuento); a new valid passport and expired or filled-up passport with Venezuelan visa (if still in holder's possession); a photocopy of the *cédula*; and Bs.105 ($1.15) in fiscal stamps.

NATIONAL IDENTITY CARD

The *cédula*, or national identity card, is valid for one year from the date of application for transients, and five years for residents. It must be applied for within two months after gaining a one-year transient visa, or the applicant is liable to a fine and may face other inconveniences.

A paper proof of application (*comprobante*) is given to the applicant when they solicit or renew the *cédula*. The individual's's *cédula* number and thumbprint are entered on this proof of application. Until the applicant receives the final plasticized identity document, which usually takes up to three months, he or she must always carry the *comprobante*. It is not proof of identity as it does not carry a photo.

The law requires anyone over 9 years of age to carry a *cédula* in provisional or final plasticized form at all times. It is advisable to keep a photocopy of the *comprobante*, of the final *cédula* when it is obtained, and of the visa, in a safe place as protection against document loss.

Requirements for a *cédula* include a valid passport with one-year transient visa, or valid resident visa in it, and two photocopies of the passport pages with the holder's photo and visa and Bs.10 ($.11) in fiscal stamps.

For renewals, a photocopy of the last *cédula* is needed. In the case of a lost *cédula*, Bs.100 ($1.09) in fiscal stamps must be paid.

A Caracas office for *cédula* applications that has parking is: Centro Comercial Plaza Las Américas, Piso 4, El Cafetal, (Tel.: 987.9765). Hours are: 7:30 a.m. - noon, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday).

BOOZ • ALLEN & HAMILTON INC.

Worldwide Leaders
In Management Consulting...

BOOZ • ALLEN & HAMILTON
DE VENEZUELA C.A.

Edificio Parque Cristal • Torre Oeste • Piso 14 • Oficina 14 - 04
Avenida Francisco de Miranda • Los Palos Grandes
Apartado (PO Box) 69.193 • Caracas 1060 • Venezuela
Telfs: (58 - 2) 285.3522 • Fax: (58 - 2) 285.5462

BETHESDA • BUENOS AIRES • CARACAS • CHICAGO • DULSSELDORF • HOUSTON • JAKARTA
LONDON • LOS ANGELES • MADRID • MEXICO • MILAN • MONTERREY • MONTREAL • MUNICH
NEW YORK • PARIS • PHILADELPHIA • SAN FRANCISCO • SAO PAULO • SINGAPORE • SYDNEY
TAMPA • TOKYO • VIENNA • WASSENAAR. ***& ALL OVER THE WORLD***

VENEZUELAN CONSULATES & EMBASSIES AROUND THE WORLD

For updates and countries not listed, consult the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Conde a Carmelitas, El Centro, (Tel.: 81.6412).

For cable addresses, all Venezuelan consulates use the word CONSULVENE, followed by the name of the city where the consulate is accredited. For embassies, use EMBAVENEZ.

ALGERIA
(jurisdiction for Tunisia and Morroco)
3 Impasses Ahmed Kara,
Chemin du Daddous
16035 Hydra Algiers P.B. 813,
1600 Alger Gare
Tel.: (213) 59.2846/4384/3097
Fax: 60.7555
Telex: 66642 EMBAVENEZ D2

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
Redcliffe and Cross Streets
P.O. Box 1201, St. John's, Antigua, W.I.
Tel.: (1809) 462.1574/1570
Fax: 462.1570
Telex: 2161 EMBAVEN AK

ARGENTINA
Calle Esmeralda No. 909, Piso 4 (1107)
Buenos Aires
Tel.: (1) 311.0450/2337, 312.2786/5749
Fax: 311.2310
Telex: 3321089 VENEZ AR

AUSTRALIA
(jurisdiction for New Zealand and Fiji)
First Floor, Suite 106, MCL Tower
Woden, ACT.2606
Canberra
P.O. Box 37 WOOWN, ACT 2606
Tel.: (61) 282.4827/4828
Fax: 281.1969
Telex: AA-62110 EMBAVENEZ

AUSTRIA
Marokkanergasse 22A-1030
A-1840 Vienna
Tel.: (1) 712.2638/2639/2640
Fax: 712.26.3821
Telex: 136219 EMBEVEN

BANGLADESH (see India)

BARBADOS
West Coast R.D.
"El Sueño" Worthing Christ Church
Bridgetown
Tel.: (1809) 435.7619/7830, 485.8062
Fax: 435.7830
Telex: 2339

BELGIUM
6 Rue Paul Emile Janson
1050 Brussels
Tel.: (2) 647.5212/8745
Fax: 647.8820
Telex: 61742 EMBAVENEZ

BELIZ
Unity Boulevard No. 18/20
Belmopan
P.O. Box 49, Belmopan
Tel.: (501) 82.2384/2789
Fax: 82.2022
Telex: 249 EMBAVENEZ

BOLIVIA
Calle Las Retamas No. 222
La Florida, La Paz
Tel.: (2) 39.2348, 35.1365, 37.5023
Fax: 35.1366

BRAZIL
Brasilia
Avda. das Nacioes Lote 13, Cuadra 803
CEP 70451
Tel.: (61) 223.9325/9835/9375/9735/9585
Telex: 1324 EVEN BR/226.5633
Belem do Pará
Avda. Gov. Jose Malcher 187
Casa 1, CEP 66000
Caixa Postal 405
Belem do Pará
Tel.: (91) 222.6396
Fax: 222.6396
Bôa Vista
Avda. Benjamin Constant 525
Esquina Rua Baráo de Rio Branco
Caixa Postal No. 206
CEP 69300 Bôa Vista, Roraima
Tel.: (095) 224.2182/3231
Fax: 224.8859
Telex: 0952042
Manaos
Rua Recife 1620 Adrianopolis
CEP 69057, AP 3241
Tel.: (92) 236.0414
Fax: 236.0414
Telex: 38.921209 CVEN B
Porto Alegre
Rua Dos Andradas 1137, 10mo. andar
Conjunto 1007
Tel.: (512) 28.1028
Rio de Janeiro
Prata de Botafogo 242
5º andar, CEP 22250, Botafogo
Caixa Postal 9056-2C-02
Tel.: (21) 551.5097/5398/5698, 552.8944
Fax: 551.5248
Telex: 30680
Sao Paulo
878 Rua Venezia
Jardín Paulista
CEP 01429
Tel.: (11) 887.2318/4585/1013/4984

BULGARIA
Todor Strahimirov 1
Sofia
Tel.: (3592) 44.3282/6584, 46.5205
Fax: 46.5205
Telex: 22087

CANADA
Ottawa
32 Range Road
Ontario KIN 8J4
Tel.: (613) 235.5151-5154
Montreal
2005 Peel St.
Suite 400
Quebec H3A 1V4
Tel.: (514) 842.3417/3418/0732
Telex: (210) 526.7523 CONSULVENE MIL
Toronto
2 Carlton Street
Suite 703
Ontario M5B 1J3
Tel.: (416) 977.6809/6810/0575
Fax: 977.6811
Telex: 06524519 CONSULEVE TOR

CHILE
Bustos No. 20-21, Providencia
Santiago de Chile
Apto. Postal 16577 Santiago 9
Tel.: (2) 225.0021/8681, 274.2857
Fax: 209.9117
Telex: 440170 EMVEN CZ

CHINA
(jurisdiction for North Korea)
San Li Tun Lu
14 Beijing
Tel.: (861) 532.1295/2694/1152
Fax: 532.3817
Telex: 22137 EMVEN CH

COLOMBIA

Bogotá
Calle 33, No. 6-94
La Lonja
Propiedad Raiz, Pisos 10, 11, y 12
Tel.: (1) 236.7005, 226.8520, 285.2035 /2459/2286/2474
Fax: 287.0494, 618.1301

Arauca
Avda. Olaya Herreran No. 2017, Piso 2
Tel.: (818) 52.246

Barranquilla
Edif. Kpana Carrera 56, No. 72-85, Apto. 5-B
Tel.: (95) 58.2832
Fax: 58.0048
Telex: 35.31429 CVEBA CO.

Bucaramanga
Carrera 35A, No. 54-54, Apto. Post. 3923
Tel.: (7) 47.1272/3134/6872
Fax: 47.1800
Telex: 357.7622 CVEN CO.

Cartagena
Calle Piñango, No. 10-10
Castillo Grande, Apto. Post. 1178
Tel.: (53) 65.0382/0353
Fax: 65.0449
Telex: 35.37859 CVCTG CO.

Cúcuta
Entre Avda. Cero
Con Calle Octava No. 8-23
Tel.: (70) 71.3983/8458/1321/2107
Fax: 71.7365
Telex: 7663 CVC CO.

Medellín
Calle 32-B No. 69-59
Barrio Belen Rosales
Apto. Postal 8804
Tel.: (4) 235.0359/1020
Fax: 325.9930
Telex: 35.56012

Puerto Carreño
Calle Orinoco
Tel.: (981) 54.057

Puerto Inirida
Comisaría Especial de Guainia
Tel.: (918) 56.117/047

Riohacha
Edif. El Ejecutivo, Piso 7-B
Carrera 7, No. 3-08
Tel.: (56) 274.076
Fax: 273.967

COSTA RICA

Avda. Central 2da Entrada, Los Yoses,
100 Metros al sur y 50 metros al oest
Apto. Postal 10.230 San Jose 1.000
Tel.: (506) 25.8810/5813, 24.4682
Fax: 53.8710
Telex: 2413 EMBAVENEZ

CZECH AND SLOVAK REPUBLICS

Praga 5, Jana e kovo Nabrezí 49
Tel.: (2) 53.6051/6052
Fax: 53.8323
Telex: 122146 EVEN C

DENMARK

Hammerensgade 3, 2 T.V.
1267 Copenhagen K
Tel.: (3) 93.6311/6476
Fax: 15.6911
Telex: 15309 EMVEN DK

DOMINICA

No. 37 Cork Street 3rd Floor
Roseau
Commonwealth of Dominica, W.I.
P.O. Box 70
Tel.: (1809) 448.3348/6502
Fax: 448.6198
Telex: 8643 EMBAVENE DO

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

No. 492 Edif. Crediamérica
Piso 3
Avda. 27 de Febrero
Apto. Postal 90, Zona 2
Santo Domingo
Tel.: 531.0960/0971/0972/0968/2427
Fax: 531.0960
Telex: 326.4795 CONSULVENE DR

ECUADOR
Quito
Coruña 1733 y Beto Horizonte
Apto. Postal 688
Tel.: (2) 56.4626/4627/4629/1448, 50.1575
Fax: 50.2630
Guayaquil
Calle Chile 329 Aguirre
Edif. Bond's, Piso 2
Oficina 906-907
Tel.: (4) 32.6579/6600/6566
Fax: 32.0751
Telex: 42453

EGYPT
15A Mansour Mohamed,
Zamalek, Cairo
P.O. Box 1217
Tel.: (2) 341.4332/3517
Fax: 341.7373
Telex: 93.638 EVECA UN

FIJI (see Australia)

FINLAND
Mannerheimitie 14 A-00100
Helsinki PL-285-0010 Helsinki
Tel.: (0) 64.1522/1523
Fax: 64.0971

FRANCE
Paris
42 Avenue du Président Wilson
Rez de Chaussée
75116
Tel.: (1) 4755.0011, 4553.0088, 4727.8417
Fax: 4727.8417
Martinique
1,400 Km. Route de Didier
Boite Postale No. 78
97200 Fort de France
Tel.: (596) 63.3416

GERMANY
Bonn
Im Rheingarten 7
5300 Bonn 3
Apto. Postal 30-02-24
Tel.: (228) 40.0920
Fax: 400.9228
Telex: 41.885447
Berlin
Otto Grotewohl Strasse, Nº5, Piso 4
1080-0 Berlin
Postfach 610470
1000 Berlin G1
Tel.: (30) 393.3353, 229.2726
Fax: 393.3353
Telex: 114058 VENEZ D.D.
Frankfurt
Broenner Strasse 17
6000 Frankfurt-am-Main 1
Tel.: (690) 287.284/285
Fax: 29.2370
Hamburg
Rothenbaumchausee 30
2000 Hamburg 13
Tel.: (40) 410.1241/1271, 44.7188
Telex: 213341 CONAM D.
Munich
Prinzregentenstrasse 54
Eingang Reittmgrstrasse
8000 Munich 22
Tel.: (89) 22.1449/1440

GREAT BRITAIN
1 Cromwell Road
London SW7 2HW
Tel.: (71) 581.2776, 584.4206/5375
Fax: 589.8887
Telex: 51.264186

GUATEMALA
8a. Calle 0-56 Zona 9
Tel.: (2) 31.505, 34.1332
Fax: 34.1331
Telex: 5317

HONG KONG
Star House 2nd. Floor
Room D2-J, Tsimshatsui
3, Salisbury Road
P.O. Box 669 G.P.O.
Kowloon
Tel.: (8523) 730.8099/8090, 736.7884
Fax: 736.6519

INDIA
(jurisdiction for Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal)
No. 114 Panchshila Park
New Delhi 110017
Tel.: (11) 643.6783/6913/6535
Fax: 647.1686
Telex: EMVE IN

ISRAEL
Kaufman 2
Beit Hatextil, Floor 16
Tel Aviv
Tel.: (3) 517.6287/6288/6289
Fax: 517.6210

ITALY
Rome
Via Bruno Buozzi, 197
00197
Tel.: (6) 321.6578, 322.1458, 361.3797
Fax: 361.3797
Florence
Via Giambologna, 10-50132
Tel.: (55) 58.8082
Holy See, Vatican City
Via Monte Zebio 32
P.O. Box 6137 Roma Prati 00195
Tel.: (6) 322.5916, 320.4425
Fax: 320.4425
Telex: 611191
Milan
Via Napo Torriani 31, Piso 5
20124
Tel.: (2) 65.4136/3685/6425
Fax: 667.13241
Naples
Via Santa Lucia No. 173
80132
Tel.: (81) 764.0550/0207
Fax: 764.0207

JAPAN
No. 38 Kowa Building Room 703, 12-21
Nishi Azabu, 4 Chome, Minato Ku
Tokyo-106
Tel.: (3) 3409.1501
Fax: 3409.1505
Telex: EMBAVENE J. 25255

MEXICO
Calle Londres 167
Edif. Simón Bolívar
Colonia Juárez
06600
Tel.: (5) 525.0364, 511.7005

MOROCCO (see Algeria)

NEPAL (see India)

NETHERLANDS ANTILLES
Aruba
Edif. Seguros Mansur, Piso 2
Paardenbaistraat 12
Oranjestad
Apto. Postal No. 78
Tel.: (5598) 21.078, 32.247
Telex: 5085
Bonaire
Calle Grandi 52
Kranledijk A.N.
Apto. Postal 376
Tel.: (5597) 5275, 8471
Fax: 8275
Curaçao
Handelskade N. 12
Piso 2, Edif. Banco Industrial
Willemstaad
Tel.: (5599) 61.4140/3100/3291
Fax: 61.3179
Telex: 390.1118 CURAVEN N.A.

NEW ZEALAND (see Australia)

KOREA - NORTH (see China)

NORWAY
Drammensveien 82, 1st Floor
0271 Oslo 2
P.O. Box: 7638 Skillebekk, 0205, Oslo 2
Tel.: (2) 43.0660/0165
Fax: 43.1470
Telex: 77297

OMAN (see Saudi Arabia)

PAKISTAN (see India)

PANAMA
Avda. Samuel Lewis
Torre Banco Union Piso 5
Apto. Postal 661 Zona 1
Tel.: (507) 69.1244/1014/1994
Fax: 69.1916
Telex: 2578

PHILIPPINES
6th Floor, Majalco Building
Benavidez Cornere Trasierra Streets
Legaspi Village, Makati Metro
Manila
MMCPO Box 1894
Tel.: (2) 817.9118/9137, 819.5791
Fax: 818.5103
Telex: 63455

PORTUGAL
Lisbon
Rua Rodrigo de Fonseca
82 - 1 Esquerdo 1200
Tel.: (1) 386.1567/1648/4468
Fax: 53.6083
Telex: 4041.8402
Funchal
Rua do Aljube No. 27 andar
Caixa Postal 469
Ilha de Madeira 9000
Tel.: (91) 37.540, 24.050
Fax: 37.540

RUSSIAN FEDERATION (former U.S.S.R.)
Ulitsa Ermolovoy 13/15
103051 Moscow
Tel.: (7015) 299.9561/9621/4042/3829/9789
Fax: (7-095) + 200.0248
Telex : (64) 413119 EMVEN Su

SAUDI ARABIA (Jurisdiction for Oman)
New Sitten Commercial center, 4th Floor,
Office NRO 4303-B
Sitten, Riyadh
P.O. Box 94364 11693 Riyadh
Tel.: (1) 476.7867/2466
Fax: 476.8200
Telex: 405509 EMBAVE SJ

SPAIN
(Note: the number 9 precedes all telephone area codes in Spain. For international direct dialing, drop the first 9 in each area code.)
Barcelona
Calle Provenza 278, Piso 3, 2A
Apto. Postal 08008
Tel.: (93) 215.0112/0116/7144, 417.1851
Fax: 215.7144
Telex: 23699
Bilbao
Calle Hurtado de Amezaga, No. 27
Edif. Sanreza, Piso 9
Departamentos 1, 2 y 10
48008
Tel.: (94) 444.4966/5284
Fax: 444.8911
Telex: 34173 CGRV-E
Cádiz
Plaza San Antonio
Primo de Rivera No. 16
Piso 3, Apto. de Correos No. 105
11003
Tel.: (956) 21.4039, 22.0289
Canary Islands
Santa Cruz de la Palma
O'Daly No. 31, 38700
Apto. Postal No. 4
Santa Cruz de la Palma
Tel.: (922) 41.1219

Madrid
Calle Francisco Gervas No. 11
Piso 4 - B, 28020
Tel.: (91) 555.4613/4592
Fax: 555.4592
Telex: 45631 COGVE
Tenerife
Santa Cruz de Tenerife
Calle El Pilar No. 27-1
Tel.: (922) 27.3316/5516
Fax: 29.0759
Seville
Juan Pablo No. 1 (El Porvenir)
Tel.: (954) 23.2146
Valencia
Paseo La Ruzafa No. 20, 1º, 46002
Tel.: (96) 351.6977/5914/7820
Vigo
Calle Marqués de Valladares No. 3, 1ra
Tel.: (986) 43.4622/5629
Fax: 43.5629

SOUTH KOREA
1801 Garden Tower 98-78, Wooni-Pong
Chongpo-Ku Seul
C.P.O. Box 10043 Seul
Tel.: (2) 741.0036/0037
Fax: 741.0046
Telex: K28889 EMVEKOR

SRI LANKA (see India)

SWEDEN
Engelbrektsgatan 35B, 114, 32
Box 26012-S-10041
Stockholm
Tel.: (11) 0996/0997, 10.3176/5321
Fax: 21.3100
Telex: 54.12339 EMBAVENE S

SWITZERLAND
9 Morillonstrasse
CH.-3007
Berne
Tel.: (31) 45.3282/3283/3284
Fax: 45.0424
Telex: 912797

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
Venezuelan Centre 16, Victoria Ave.
Port of Spain, Trinidad, W.I.
Tel.: (62) 79.773/774
Fax: 55438

TUNISIA (see Algeria)

UNITED STATES
Baltimore
111 Water Street, Suite 402
Maryland 21202
Tel.: (410) 962.0363
Boston
545 Boylston Street
6th floor, Suite 603
Massachusetts 02116
Tel.: (617) 266.9355/9368/9386
Fax: 266.2350
Telex: 234.928283 CONSULVENE UD
Chicago
20 North Wacker Drive
Suite 750
Illinois 60606
Tel.: (312) 236.9659,235.9655
Fax: 580.1010
Telex: 234.4330235
Houston
2700 Post Oak Blvd.
Suite 1500
Texas 77056
Tel.: (713) 961.5142/5166
Fax: 961.1485
Telex: 234.166583 CONSULVENE Houston
Miami
1101 Brickell Ave., Suite 901
Florida 33131
Tel.: (305) 446.2851/2918/2917/2852
Fax: 448.5699, 372.5167
New Orleans
1006-1009 World Trade Center,
2 Canal Street
Louisiana 70130
Tel.: (504) 522.3284, 524.9217/6700
Fax: 522.7092
Telex: 234.6821205 CONVENE

New York
7 East 51st Street
New York 10022
Tel.: (212) 826.1660/1667, 826.1669/1684
Fax: 644.7471, 557.3528

Philadelphia
Suite 303, New Market
at Head House Square
Pennsylvania 19147
Tel.: (215) 923.2910/2916
Fax: 923.4722
Telex: 215.9102501031

Puerto Rico
Edif. Mercantil Plaza, Piso 6
Oficina 601, Avda. Ponce de León
Hato Rey, San Juan, 00918
P.O Box 13895 Santurce, Puerto Rico 00908
Tel.: (809) 766.4250/4251
Fax: 766.4255
Telex: 2667 CONV VZ

San Francisco
455 Market Street
Suite 220
California 94105
Tel.: (415) 512.8340/8342, 512.8447/7593/7694
Fax: 512.7693

Washington D.C.
Embassy of Venezuela
1099 30th Street N.W.
20007
Tel.: (202) 342.2214/6842, 242.6843

Tan seguro como su nombre

SEGUROS LA SEGURIDAD
COMPAÑIA ANONIMA

Inscrita en el Ministerio de Fomento bajo el Nº 12

OFICINA PRINCIPAL
Av. Universidad, Esq. El Chorro, Torre El Chorro
Cable SEGURIDAD Télex 21276 SEGUR VC
Apartado 473 - Caracas 1010
Telfs. 563.50.55 - 563.46.33 - 563.95.77
Fax 564.25.76

OFICINA REGION CAPITAL
Caracas - Distrito Federal
Esquina Las Ibarras, Av. Urdaneta
Edif. Pasaje La Seguridad
Telfs.: 563.65.61 - 563.45.63
Fax: 562.88.96

OFICINA REGIONAL LOS ANDES
San Cristóbal - Edo. Táchira
Carrera 4 con Calle 14, Sector La Ermita,
Edif. La Seguridad. Télex 76101 SEGUR VC
Telf.: (076) 44.40.11
Fax: 44.69.56

OFICINA REGIONAL DEL CENTRO
Valencia - Edo. Carabobo
Av. Bolívar Norte, Torre Camoruco, Piso 21
Télex: 41251 SEGVA VC
Telfs.: (041) 22.69.22
Fax: 22.68.20

OFICINA REGIONAL CENTRO OCCIDENTAL
Barquisimeto - Edo. Lara
Av. Lara cruce con Av.
Concordia, Edif. Centro del Este
Pisos: 3 y 4 Urb. del Este
Télex: 51165 SEGUR VC
Telfs.: (051) 54.17.44 - 54.16.44
Fax: 54.14.55

OFICINA REGIONAL ORIENTE
Puerto La Cruz - Edo. Anzoátegui
Av. Municipal
Torre La Seguridad, Pisos 2, 11 y 12
Télex: 81230 SEGOR VC
Telfs.: (081) 66.44.22
Fax: 66.67.77

OFICINA REGIONAL GUAYANA
Puerto Ordaz - Edo. Bolívar
Edf. Seguridad, Calle Cuchiveros
(Av. Guayana), Alta Vista
Télex: 86143 SEGPO VC
Telfs.: (086) 62.00.11
Fax: 62.22.52

OFICINA REGIONAL ZULIA - FALCON
Maracaibo - Edo. Zulia
Boulevard 5 deJulio con Av. 16
Edif. Befercom, Piso 1
Télex: 62205 SEGMA VC
Telfs: (061) 51.41.66
Fax: 52.70.71

Publicidad aprobada por la Superintendencia de Seguros bajo el Nº 9732

TRANSPORTING BELONGINGS

WHAT TO BRING

Most everyday items can be purchased in the numerous shops throughout Venezuela, and especially in Caracas. However, some items are hard to find or significantly more expensive in Venezuela to make bringing them from abroad worthwhile. Almost all consumer goods are less expensive in the United States than are local products of similar quality in Venezuela, while imported goods may sell for up to four times the price of the same item in a North American discount store.

APPLIANCES

Electricity in Venezuela is 110 volts, 60 cycles, and most houses and apartments have 220-volt connections available for kitchen ranges or clothes dryers.

It is usually worthwhile to bring large electrical appliances, although the brand should be well-known so that obtaining service and parts will not be a problem. Both General Electric and Phillips have plants in Venezuela. Whether imported or manufactured locally, appliances have a good resale value.

Within Venezuela, the cost of a locally-made, 15-cubic-foot refrigerator is between Bs.42,770 ($470) and Bs.52,780 ($580), while an 18-cubic-foot imported Kenmore with icemaker is about Bs.84,630 ($930). Both imported and locally manufactured washer and dryer "twin sets," with the dryer mounted above the washer, and a 6-kg. (12lbs. 12 oz) capacity, retail at about Bs.84,630 ($900).

Neither space heaters nor air conditioners are necessary in Caracas, although air conditioning is recommended in Maracaibo and Valencia. Carrier and Panasonic are the most common varieties in Venezuela. Space heaters may be useful in Mérida and other Andean locations.

Photographic equipment and all electronic gadgets including cellular telephones, compact disc players, stereo systems, Nintendo sets and calculators are less expensive in the United States. The same holds true for small kitchen and household appliances, such as microwave ovens, hair dryers, toasters, and electric shavers. Oster, Black and Decker, and Electrolux have local plants, and generally can service these products.

Because the power flow is unsteady in Venezuela, a surge protector or voltage regulator is useful to protect electrical equipment.

CHILDREN'S ITEMS

Many items for infants are very expensive on the local market, or of poor quality. Car safety seats, for example, are not manufactured in Venezuela and must be imported, while car seats and imported strollers and playpens are sold here but are at least double the U.S. price. Other items difficult to find include prefolded diapers and diaper covers. Although locally made cribs are about the same price as in the United States, they usually do not meet U.S. safety standards.

Locally manufactured diapers do not have leak barriers on the inside, while imported diapers retail for at least Bs.910 ($10) for a pack of 30.

Disposable bottles are also not available. Formulas available locally, but in powdered form only, include Nursoy, Similac and Prosobee, which sell for between Bs.432 ($4.75) and

CONCIENCIA AMBIENTAL

El Grupo Cartón de Venezuela y sus Compañías Asociadas se comprometen en hacer de la preservación del ambiente una prioridad en sus operaciones existentes, así como en sus nuevas inversiones y continuará desarrollando el conocimiento de sus empleados y trabajadores con respecto a sus responsabilidades ambientales.

Es nuestra política, satisfacer a nuestros clientes de manera que sea un apoyo a una producción compatible con el medio ambiente, a operar en armonía con una ecología global y promover la protección ambiental copmo parte de nuestra actividad en los negocios.

El Grupo Cartón de Venezuela tiene como objetivo asegurar que vivamos y trabajemos en un mundo ambientalmente amistoso.

Grupo
Cartón de Venezuela
y sus Compañías asociadas

Cartones Nacionales, Cartoenvases Valencia, Cartoenvases Guacara,
Cartón, Mocarpel, División Forestal, Fibras Industriales

Bs.546 ($6) per one-pound can. Carnation Good Start formulas are not available.

Backpacks and school supplies for school-age children are cheaper and available in a wider variety in the United States. All students wear school uniforms of t-shirts, whose color depends on the grade, blue jeans, navy trousers or skirt.

FOOD

Coffee and tea are readily available in Venezuela, although flavored teas are hard to come by and are very expensive.

Food worth bringing includes peanut butter (sporadically available), grits, non-instant cream of wheat, and colored sugars and sprinkles for holiday baking. British visitors will need to bring their own supplies of Marmite spread. Granola bars, dried spices, and powdered mixes are available but in limited supply, and imported chocolate bars and boxes of candy are available at a high price.

PERSONAL SUPPLIES

Many prescription medicines are available over the counter in Venezuela. However, particular brands of painkillers may not be available, so it is best to bring personal supplies.

Many international brands of lotion, shampoo, and toothpaste are available, although are often more expensive. Tampons are certainly worth bringing, since they are extremely expensive here. Allergy sufferers should know that non-scented or perfume-free products are not readily available in Venezuela.

Eyeglasses are less expensive, generally speaking, and available in greater variety outside Venezuela. Disposable contact lenses are currently available at the same price as in the United States, but contact lens solutions are more expensive.

LEISURE

English-language books are routinely sold at twice or more the U.S. suggested retail price, although there is a large second-hand market for these books.

CDs are very expensive. Most, including recordings of Venezuelan and other Latin music, are available in the United States and Europe at better prices.

Athletic equipment, including clothing and camping equipment, is expensive, since most is imported.

CLOTHING

Overcoats and woolen scarves can be left behind, wrapped up and smothered in mothballs, unless rough camping in the Andes is on the agenda.

In this land where average year-round temperatures vary between 16ºC (61ºF) and 33 ºC (91ºF), what is needed are plenty of cool-on-the-skin clothes. During working hours, it's light or medium-weight suits for men, and linen skirts, trousers and blouses, or linen and cotton suits and dresses for women.

Outside the office, men use sports jackets, short-sleeved shirts and comfortable trousers for informal get-togethers. For women, easy-to-wear cotton dresses, shorts and shirts are a must. Some warmer sweaters or woolen spring-weight blazers will be needed during the cooler months from November through February. Shorts are considered inappropriate for men except for recreational activities.

Caracas by day may look casual but at night it becomes super-sophisticated. For more intimate gatherings, the password is elegant informal, both for the ladies - whether it be dresses or pants - and for the men, who turn out in smart blazers and sports jackets. For more formal occasions, ladies' evening toilettes can be real extravaganzas: Elegant, daring, stylish - everything the latest, from high heels to hairdo. For gentlemen, a good, well-cut dark suit is a must, since many of the top restaurants and clubs require formal wear. Caracas nights generally call for only a light sweater or shawl thrown over the shoulders, although something warmer will be needed at higher elevations and in the cooler months.

During the rainy season, elaborate rain gear and boots are more of an encumbrance than a help. Temperatures during the sudden storms remain fairly warm and the humidity rises. Anyone caught in the rain will be soaked, no matter what their attire.

Shoes made in Venezuela are beautiful and inexpensive, but are often only manufactured in medium sizes and lack the support features of many U.S. shoes.

Summer-weight panty hose (especially for the tall), lingerie, and cotton socks are good things to bring, since they either unavailable, expensive or of old-fashioned styles in Venezuela.

DUTY FREE

Travelers entering Venezuela may bring in, duty free, up to two cartons of cigarettes, 50 cigars or 250 grams (9 ozs.) of tobacco. Any two liters of liquor may also be brought.

Personal possessions that are more than six months old may all be brought into the country without duty, including items such as a camera, typewriter, tape recorder, binoculars and sports equipment. However, if these goods are new, they should not have a total value of more than $1,000 (Bs. 91,000) to be exempted from import duties. All receipts should be carried. The value of new goods must be detailed on a customs declaration form or Declaración de Aduanas, provided by airlines or travel agents.

In late 1990, customs inspections at Simón Bolívar International Airport began operating on a randomly selective "traffic light" checking system. Only those passengers who get the random red light are subject to baggage search.

There are no restrictions on the amount of Venezuelan or foreign currency that the traveler may bring in or out of the country.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

It is illegal to carry narcotics into Venezuela and penalties for foreigners are strict, ranging from immediate deportation to lengthy jail sentences. Hard drugs and so-called "soft" drugs all come under the same law: An ounce of marijuana is just as serious as a kilo of cocaine in Venezuelan courts.

However, a modest supply of personal medicines is permitted. Since the quality and formula of specific medications may not be available in Venezuela, people with chronic conditions or who need continuous treatment should consider bringing such medication with them. Permission to bring in specialized personal medical supplies should be obtained from a Venezuelan consulate before departure.

Other items not recommended to bring into the country include:

- Fresh flowers, sugar-cane plants, citrus and other fresh fruits, cotton-plant seeds, and pork, which are all strictly prohibited for health reasons. Raw-food products may enter

the country only with the permission of the Venezuelan Ministry of Agriculture (Ministerio de Agricultura y Cría) and must be accompanied by an official health certificate from the country of origin.

- Firearms, ammunition, explosives, etc., can only be imported with special prior authorization from both the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of the Interior (Ministerio de Defensa y Ministerio de Relaciones Interiores). Moreover, only certain types of firearms are permitted.
Note: Only Venezuelan citizens may apply for licenses to carry firearms. **(See "Firearms," page 241.)**

- Excessive amounts of any item, such as beverages, uncut fabrics, electrical appliances and stereo equipment, which are perceived as exceeding the normal needs of a family or which appear to be for commercial purposes, are prohibited and subject to confiscation.

TRANSPORTATION OF GOODS

ACCOMPANIED LUGGAGE

Flights from the United States or Canada accept luggage by the "piece" system, rather than by weight. Each coach-class passenger is allowed two pieces of checked luggage, the total combined dimensions of which cannot exceed 273 cm. (107 inches). The largest piece cannot exceed 158 cm. (62 inches), with neither piece exceeding 32 kilos (70 pounds). Carry-on luggage cannot exceed 115 cm (45 inches). Rates for excess baggage vary, and may be charged by weight or by piece, depending on the airline.

Direct flights from Europe usually follow the same system, but if a stopover in Europe is involved, luggage limits are determined by weight. IATA-member airlines allow each economy-class passenger 23 kilos (50 pounds) of luggage. For business-class travelers, the limit is 30 kilos (66 pounds), and for first-class, 40 kilos (88 pounds). Passengers who exceed the weight limit may be asked to pay the equivalent of 1 percent of a first-class ticket per excess kilogram, and depending on the volume of traffic at the time of travel, the airline may refuse to accept excess baggage.

Items such as a child's stroller, car safety seat, and sports equipment (golf bags, skis, etc.) do not come under the regular baggage limit and are covered by special rules. If shipping things in boxes rather than suitcases, the airline should be consulted to see if insurance coverage applies.

UNACCOMPANIED SHIPMENTS

Most surface shipments to Venezuela arrive at the port of La Guaira (serving Caracas), Puerto Cabello (serving Valencia), Guanta (Eastern Venezuela), or Maracaibo (Western Venezuela), but other ports may be used during congested periods, or for convenience. The international airports at Caracas and Maracaibo receive the bulk of air-freight shipments.

Whether by surface or air, shipment of household and personal effects should be managed by a reliable international moving company with an experienced agent in Venezuela. The agent may or may not act as a customs broker. In many cases, three separate firms may be involved in the handling of one shipment: The original moving company, the customs broker in Venezuela and the Venezuelan affiliate of the original moving firm.

Shipments should be insured all-risk, door-to-door, with an extension safety clause to cover storage periods. A complete list of all items with their respective values should be

drawn up prior to packing and a copy should be sent to the insurance company before shipping.

For ocean shipping, sealed containers are recommended since they protect goods from moisture and rough handling, as well as discouraging stealing.

Fees for both shipment and customs brokerage vary according to the weight, volume and value of the shipment. Import duties on household effects that are new or have been used for less than six months are expected to be approved soon by the Ministry of Finance (Ministerio de Hacienda). A value declaration must be submitted but values of goods should not be listed in the packing list, certificate of use, or in any other document required by customs officials.

DOCUMENTATION FOR GOODS

To bring furniture and household goods into Venezuela, the owner should hold a one-year transient visa. Owners must be present in Venezuela before their shipment arrives so they can supply necessary documentation to customs brokers.

Documents needed include:

- A *certificado de uso* or certificate. This states the nature of the goods to be shipped, without their values, and the length of time they have been in the possession of the owner. An experienced international shipping company can supply a form and advice on how it should be filled out. It should be presented for validation at a Venezuelan consulate in the country of embarkation. An original and two copies are recommended.
- An Air Waybill (air freight) or Bill of Lading (surface), with goods described as *efectos personales usados* or used personal effects. No values should appear on this document.
- An inventory in Spanish with no values listed. A reputable moving company in Venezuela will translate this from English.
- A letter from the owner's employer in Venezuela. This is not obligatory, but highly recommended to achieve the maximum discount on duties.

It is advisable to have a home selected and a firm contract signed before household goods arrive in Venezuela: Shipments should be cleared through customs as quickly as possible to avoid high-penalty warehousing fees and possible pilferage. Demurrage charges will occur after the first 12 days for ocean shipment s, and five days for air shipments. The period for customs clearance will vary from five days for air shipments to eight days for ocean, as long as all documentation required is presented.

PETS

Certain airlines allow small pets under seven kilograms (15 lbs.) to be carried in the passenger section, subject to prior approval by the aircraft captain. Usually only one animal is allowed in the cabin per flight.

Pets traveling in the pressurized luggage compartment of the airplane must be placed securely in containers that meet airline requirements with regard to weight, size and ventilation. Some airlines can supply containers. The cost of shipping varies according to weight and volume, but usually the charge is 1 percent of a first-class ticket per kilogram (2 lbs. 2 oz).

Upon landing, pet containers are unloaded with luggage at the airport luggage pick-up area. To pass through customs with an animal, the owner must present the pet's documentation at the *estampillas* counter in the airport arrival area and purchase the necessary fiscal stamps.

Whenever possible, pets should travel on the same airplane as the owner to ensure rapid unloading and prompt pick-up upon landing.

Encajar en el gusto de todos no es fácil
...Pero hay quienes lo logran!

✔ **Una buena receta,**
✔ **Materia prima de la mejor calidad**
✔ **Y una elaboración de primera.**

Son los secretos de Nabisco La Favorita para complacer todos los gustos.
Por eso, siempre serán

...Tus Favoritas!

DOCUMENTATION FOR PETS

Any pet entering Venezuela must have a general health certificate issued, signed, and stamped by a licensed veterinarian not more than 15 days prior to entry into Venezuela. Additional vaccination certificates, obtained within the preceding year, are also required.

Dogs need a valid vaccination certificate for rabies, parvovirosis, distemper, hepatitis, and leptospirosis.

Cats need a valid vaccination certificate for rabies and panleucopenia.

The above documents must be presented for validation at the appropriate Venezuelan consulate in the country of departure. Some Venezuelan consulates in the United States also require health certificates to be certified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture office closest to the owner's home.

Other requirements include an export permit, to be obtained 15 days before departure, with all other papers in hand, from the Agriculture Ministry (Ministerio de Agricultura y Cría), in Torre Este, Parque Central (Tel.: 509.0111). Purchase the Bs.50 ($.55) fiscal stamp and affix it to the permit. Certification of the export permit must be obtained by the Foreign Relations Ministry (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores), Torre BND, P.B., Avda. Urdaneta, Conde a Carmelitas.

At Maiquetía Airport, before checking in, a free, final stamp of approval is needed from the Agriculture Ministry, located near the Viasa end of the international terminal.

AUTOMOBILES

IMPORTATION

Under current import laws, both new and used vehicles can be imported into Venezuela. However, the rules on importing cars and applicable duties are subject to frequent change depending on the whims of the Venezuelan government, local protectionist forces in the industry, and the customs agency. Updated information can be obtained from the commercial section of the U.S. Embassy.

The moving company chosen should have experience in transporting cars. Duties for new cars depend on their make and model rather than their sale price, and are set by customs officials, irrespective of the sales receipt. Duties run from 26 percent for cars valued at less that $20,000 (Bs.1,820,000) to 65 percent for those valued at more than this amount.

Used vehicles can be imported without paying duties, provided they form part of the passenger's household effects' shipment and they meet the following requirements:

- The vehicle was owned by and in the shipper's possession outside Venezuela during the past 11 months.
- The owner is at least 18 years old and is either a returning Venezuelan citizen or holds a transient or resident visa.
- The original sales receipt and title have been legalized by the Consul General of the Venezuelan consulate with jurisdiction at the owner's home city.
- The purchase price of the vehicle is less than $20,000 (Bs.1,820,000).

Those entering Venezuela on a tourist visa may import any vehicle for a period of not more than six months. The tourist will need a special tourist visa with international admission documents or an Andean Pact member nation's customs pass.

If the vehicle is not exported before the temporary permit expires, it will be confiscated and the importer will be subject to a fine equal to the CIF (cost, insurance and freight) value of the vehicle. A bond insuring that duties will be paid is required when the vehicle enters the country. A 26 percent duty is charged for vehicles costing more than $20,000 (Bs.1,820,000).

Calidad y Responsabilidad.

CYANAMID

Excelencia en productos farmacéuticos, agroquímicos, veterinarios, industriales, para la construcción, decoración y suturas quirúrgicas.

DIVISION AGROPECUARIA

PROWL

RIPERCOL*

CYGRO*

DIVISION FORMICA

SURELL®
Material Sólido de Superficie

MARCA FORMIVENCA
Laminado decorativo de alta resistencia

MARCA REGISTRADA® FORMICA
laminado decorativo

Postforming 180°

Design® Concepts

DIVISION INDUSTRIAL

Cauchos: Cyrez®

Compuesto de Moldeo: Cyglas®

Papel: Cypres® Accostrenght® Accurac®

Pinturas: Cymel®

Aguas y Minería: Superfloc®

DIVISION DAVIS + GECK

DERMALON® MAXON® DG® DAVIS + GECK DEXON® NOVAFIL®

DIVISION LEDERLE

AUTRIN*
MINOCIN*
LEDERCORDE*

LEDERFORM*
PARFENAC
DIAMOX*

Lederle

NOVATRONE*
PIPRIL*
METOTREXATO

LEUCOVORINA
THIOTEPA
CISPLATINO

CYANAMID DE VENEZUELA, C.A.
Centro CYANAMID - Calle 1-2 - La Urbina
Teléfonos: 241.08.82 - 241.47.05 - Caracas 1070
Apartado 5991, Caracas 1010

CHAPTER III

CHECKING IN

TEMPORARY QUARTERS

Venezuela's hotel industry received a boost when the oil boom began in 1973, which increased the year-round influx of visitors and business executives. The country's growing importance as a tourism destination means that hotels, especially in the capital, are now better geared to accommodate the increasing numbers of foreign visitors.

Five-star hotels are generally limited to the largest cities, and short-notice bookings can usually be made except at peak vacation periods and during conventions.

The Meliá Caracas in Caracas' Bello Monte is scheduled to open in early 1994, and should help to meet the city's luxury hotel lodging demands for the near future. The twin-tower structure on Avda. Casanova will offer 326 rooms, 62 suites, and 232 two-and three-bedroom apartments, as well as numerous other five-star facilities.

Some of the most popular established quality hotels - all with international standards - are the Tamanaco Inter-Continental, Caracas Hilton, Hotel Eurobuilding, Hotel CCCT, Hotel Paseo Las Mercedes and the Anauco Hilton, the latter which operates both as a hotel and residence. Altamira Suites in Altamira is increasingly being used by multinational companies to accommodate their employees before permanent housing is found.

A number of budget properties are located in the center of Caracas near the bus station and La Hoyada Metro station, but the area can be dangerous at night. Better low-budget alternatives along with middle-of-the-range properties can be found around the Sabana Grande and Plaza Venezuela areas. Here, simple but clean rooms with bathrooms can be found at a fraction of the price of the five-star hotels, but without the associated facilities. It should be noted, however, that some of the budget hotels in Caracas and elsewhere in Venezuela are used either by prostitutes or by couples by the hour.

Venezuela's currency devaluation has left hotel prices below most other Caribbean destinations, but rates in Caracas are substantially higher than in other Venezuelan cities. Government regulations determine the number of stars assigned to a hotel, and control prices for all but the five-star category. Five-star hotels set their own rates, which range from $120 (Bs.10,920) to $200 (Bs.18,200) a night. Four-star hotels run around $75 (Bs.6,825) a night. Three-star hotels with more basic, but still complete, facilities can be a real bargain at less than $40 (Bs.3,640). It is best to consult a local travel agency for recommendations of three-star hotels in unfamiliar destinations since the quality can vary widely. A 10 percent hotel tax is levied on anyone holding a tourist visa or tourist card.

Some newcomers find it more economical and more convenient to use a hotel residence as home base during the settling-in period, particularly those families traveling with young children. Caracas has several such hotels, usually furnished apartments designed for long-term guests, varying widely in quality and facilities. Size varies from one-room efficiencies to

PORTICO PALACE - The Hotel Los Frailes in Mérida.

HOTEL EUROBUILDING

Eurobuilding
Hotel & Suites
Caracas

Estamos orgullosos de anunciar la proxima apertura de las Eurosuites...

180 Suites de lujo de 1, 2 y 3 módulos con todos los servicios de un verdadero hotel 5 estrellas, con la calidez y el confort de sentirse como en su propia casa.

Nuestras Eurosuites cuentan con restaurantes, bares, salones para reuniones y banquetes, servicios secretariales, servicio de pisos las 24 horas, piscina, gimnasio, sauna, baño turco, lavandería, valet parking, galería de tiendas y una gran variedad de servicios para usted.

Para mayor información contactarse a nuestro Dpto. de Mercadeo y Ventas
☎ (02) 907.2008 Fax: (02) 907.2002

Eurobuilding
Hotel & Suites

Teléfonos Master: (02) 959.1133 / (02) 907.1111

Anauco Hilton
Parque Central
El Conde
Mailing address:
Apto. 6380
Caracas 1010-A
Tel.: 573.4111, 571.5702
Telex: 21886 ANAHI VC
Cable: ANAUCOHIL
Fax: 573.7724

The Anauco Hilton is a sister hotel to the Caracas Hilton, and offers residential suites in addition to less expensive executive rooms. Located in the Parque Central complex in the cultural and commercial center of Caracas, it is just a two-minute walk from the Caracas Hilton.

The hotel has 335 rooms, most of which are duplex apartments of two, three, and four bedrooms fully equipped with refrigerator, oven, washing machine, dryer facilities, cable TV, and daily maid service.

Other benefits offered to permanent guests are the use of the Caracas Hilton swimming pool, tennis courts and gym. The hotel also features executive rooms located on its first five floors.

The Anauco itself offers room service, a pub restaurant and its own formal restaurant. Three new conference rooms have been added, making a total of six available with audio-visual equipment.

Eurobuilding Caracas
Calle La Guairita
Chuao
Mailing address:
Apto. 64487
Caracas 1064-A
Tel.: 907.1111, 959.1133, 993.3060
Telex: 27579 EUROB VC
Fax: 907.2189/2013, 993.9285

The Hotel Eurobuilding, in the eastern section of the city, has an imposing appearance with its vast expanses of marble and plate glass. The hotel is linked to an office tower, giving the whole complex a feeling of ultra-modern self-sufficiency from the surrounding city.

The 456 rooms have all the standard five-star features, including an individual safe deposit box that allows guests to set their own combination. The Eurosuites tower was scheduled to open at the end of August 1993, with 179 luxury apartment/suites of varying sizes for longer stays.

The lobby overlooks the pool area with a large asymmetrical adult pool and a smaller one for children. The various restaurants and bars offer Spanish nouvelle cuisine as part of the international fare, snacks and vegetarian buffets.

Three types of Sunday brunch are offered from 11:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Criollo with Venezuelan music, International in the Jardin Criollo, and vegetarian in the Verdelecho.

Hotel CCCT
Centro Ciudad Comercial Tamanaco
Level Sotano 1, Torre D
Chuao
Tel.: 959.0611/3098/1944
Telex: 29815 ACCTV VC, 21991 VENANTUR
Fax: 261.4122

The hotel CCCT is located within the largest shopping complex in Caracas, the Centro Ciudad Comercial Tamanaco, featuring indoor shops, offices, dance clubs, movie theaters and restaurants. The hotel offers its own dining area and two cocktail lounges.

The hotel's rooms all feature separate sitting rooms, air-conditioning, small refrigerators and color televisions with satellite programming. There are 80 double rooms, 96 junior suites, and 16 regular suites, in addition to pool, tennis, gymnasium, and sauna facilities.

Hotel CCCT has various meeting rooms, the largest of which can accommodate 350 people.

Hotel Paseo Las Mercedes
Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Mailing Adress:
Apto. 61.182
Caracas 1060-A
Tel.: 91.0444/0033
92.2797 (Reservations)
Telex: 23127 HINCA VC
Fax: 993.0341

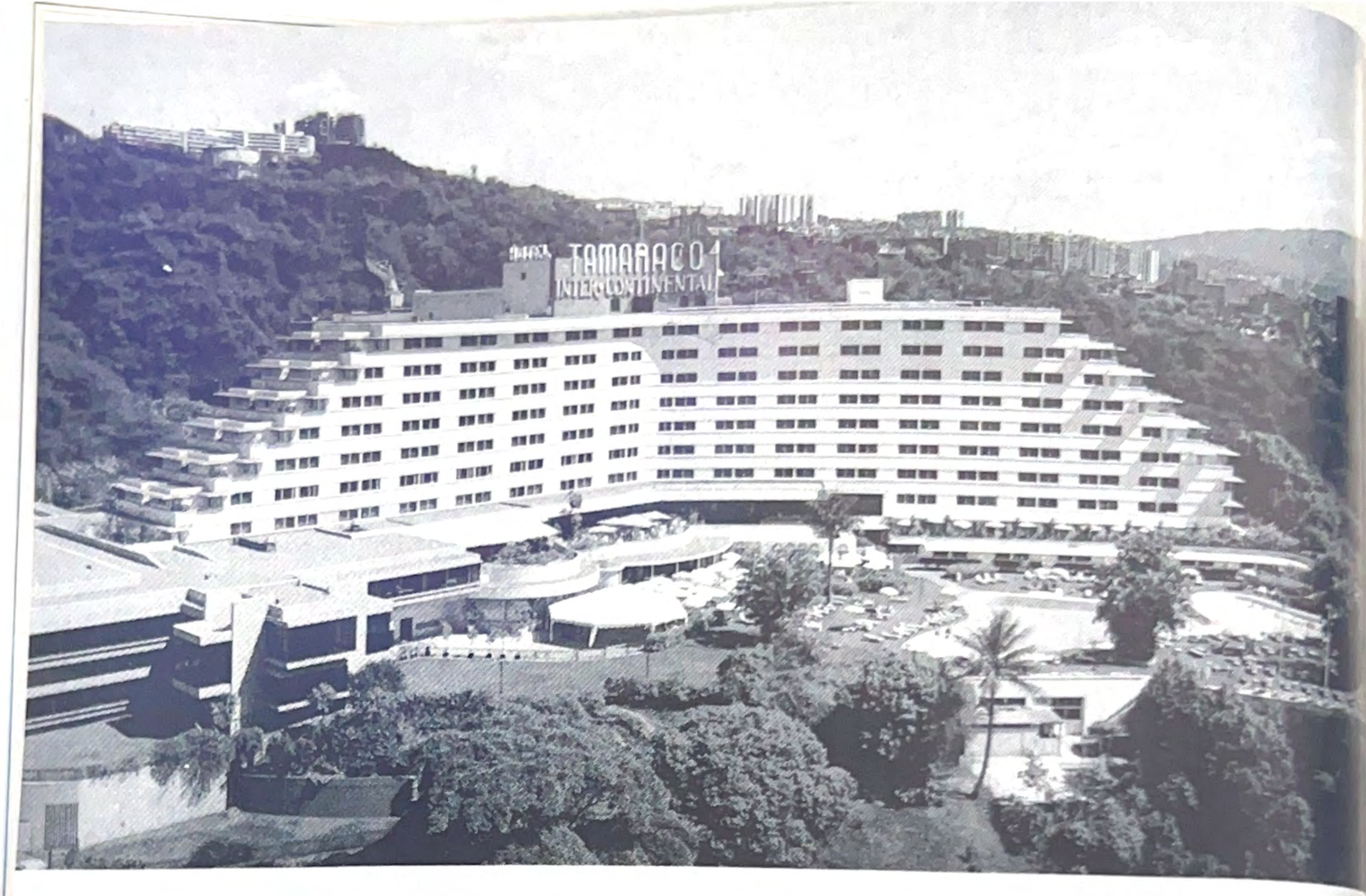
The Hotel Paseo Las Mercedes is situated within a large shopping complex of the same name. Everything is at hand: movie theaters, restaurants, and several levels of stores and offices.

The hotel has 197 air-conditioned rooms with cable TV. A roof-top restaurant opens onto the terrace of a small swimming pool.

A banquet-meeting room holds up to 60 people, while the main salon has a capacity of 300. Audio-visual equipment is available for conferences. Room service is available 24 hours a day and there are two floors featuring VIP service for executives. There is also a desk for National Car Rental.

The hotel is expanding its facilities, adding more conference rooms that are expected to be ready by 1995.

Hotel President
Avda. Valparaiso
Los Caobos
Mailing Address:
Apto. 51042
Caracas
Tel.: 782.6622/6390, 708.8111
Telex: 29037 PARDO VC
Fax: 782.6144/6458



The most demanding travelers stay with us

TAMANACO INTER-CONTINENTAL

40 AÑOS

DE INOLVIDABLE EXCELENCIA

Apartado 467. Las Mercedes-Caracas- Venezuela. Phone: (58)(2)-92.45.22
91.45.55 - Telex: 23.260 Telefax: 208.71.16

Within easy walking distance from the Plaza Venezuela Metro station and from the Sabana Grande boulevard shopping area, the hotel's convenient location offers guests fast access to cultural and financial centers.

Geared towards business executives, the President's 165 air-conditioned, sound-proof rooms and suites are equipped with remote control TV and satellite programming. Convention, meeting, and banquet facilities are all sound-proofed and audio-visual equipment is available.

The hotel also provides executive floors exclusively for women, which offer additional security. Cuisine includes northern Italian dishes and other international foods.

Hotel Tamanaco Inter-Continental
Final, Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Mailing Address:
Apto. 467
Caracas 1060-A
Tel.: 208.7111 (Master)
208.7000 (Reservations)
Telex: 23260 TAMAN VC
Cable: INHOELCOR
Fax: 208.7116 (Messages to guests)
208.7004 (Reservations)

The Tamanaco Inter-Continental is nestled against a hillside in the Las Mercedes section of Caracas. Situated away from the downtown area, it has the air of a country club, with 38 acres of tropical gardens complete with a swimming pool, terraces and a lively pool-side buffet restaurant. However, its position also means it is a considerable distance away from the Metro and therefore can be difficult to reach except by taxi.

The Tamanaco has 600 air-conditioned rooms, many with a panoramic view of Caracas, plus luxury suites, all with terraces. All rooms have color TV, satellite antenna and AM/FM radio.

There are three floodlit hard tennis courts, a modern gym and a Finnish sauna. The hotel offers complete banquet and meeting facilities, with equipment and simultaneous translation services available. The largest hall accommodates up to 2,000 people.

Restaurant options are varied, ranging from informal dining in the coffee shop, to international dining with piano accompaniment at its best restaurant. A Japanese breakfast, pizza and buffet dinner are also served. On Sundays, the Cacique Terrace features a Criollo brunch with traditional Venezuelan music.

The Tamanaco has several shops and a pharmacy, beauty parlor and barbershop. American and Viasa have airline offices, and the hotel also features travel agents, a bank, car rental and real estate agencies and the office of the Rotary Club of Chuao.

Other Inter-Continental hotels in Venezuela include: Hotel Inter-Continental Guayana, Ciudad Guyana; Hotel Del Lago Inter-Continental, Maracaibo; and Hotel Inter-Continental Valencia, Valencia.

Santa Fé Suite Garden
Avda. José María Vargas
(Via Autopista Prados del Este)
Santa Fe Norte
Mailing Address:
Apto. 17332
Caracas 1010-A
Tel.: 979.8355/8033/8044
Telex: 27.889 STAFE VC
Fax: 979.6580

Tucked into the quiet neighborhood of Santa Fé, south of the main part of the city, this four-star hotel is a good option as a residence or hotel for short or long stays. Corporate and convention rates are available. Only minutes from the restaurants and shopping in Las Mercedes and the CCCT, there is convenient transportation via the autopista Prados del Este to any location in town as well as a nearby MetroBus stop.

All suites feature a large bedroom, small bedroom, living/dining area with satellite TV and kitchen.

Meeting rooms can accommodate groups from 10 to 150 persons, while terraces have space for social functions of up to 300.

Santa Fé Suite Garden features a restaurant and bars, pool and solarium as well as a sauna and gymnasium.

General information on hotels in Caracas can be obtained in the following listings. The price and services information also applies to the listings for Maracaibo and Valencia.

All rooms are equipped with private bath, telephone, television, air conditioning, bar, restaurant and parking unless otherwise noted. Stars next to the name of the hotel indicate its rating by the National Tourism Corporation, Corpotourismo.

HOTEL KEY

A=$100.00 or more (Bs.9,100)
B=$100-$75 (Bs.9,100-6,825)
C=$75-$45 (Bs.6,825-4,275)
D=$45-$25 (Bs.4,275-2,275)
E=$25 or less (Bs.2,275)

↔ Long-term residential hotel

Satellite programming 1
Beauty parlor 2
Barber shop 3
Boutique 4
Conference room 5
Audio-visual equipment 6
Suites 7
Nightclub 8
Swimming pool 9
Beach 10
Sports facilities 11
Sauna 12
Cooking facilities 13
Gymnasium 14

HOTELS IN CARACAS

Altamira
1ra. Avda. y 1ra. Transversal
Los Palos Grandes
Mailing Address:
Apartado 68287
Caracas
Tel.: 209.3111.3464/3497, 284.8604
Telex: 26909 ALSUI
Fax: 283.5574, 284.2329
Services: 1,4,5,6,7,9,13,14
Price range: B

Anauco Hilton (★★★★)
Parque Central
El Conde
Tel.: 571.5702, 573.4111
Telex: 21886 ANAHI VC
Cable: ANAUCOHIL
Fax: 573.7724
Services: 1,3,4,5,6,7,9,11,12,13,14
Price range: C

Apart-Hotel Residencial Los Ilustres
Avda. Francisco Pimentel
En frente de Paseo Los Ilustres
Santa Mónica
Tel.: 661.1665, 662.9113/6535/9054
Fax: 662.6953
Services: (no bar, restaurant), 7, 13
Price range: D

Aventura Caracas (★★★★)
Avda. Sorocaima
Con esquina Avda. Fco. Fajardo
San Bernardino
Tel.: 51.2022/4504/4011
Telex: 27359 AVCAR VC
Fax: 51.9186
Services: 5,6,9,11,14
Price range: C

Avila (★★★★)
Avda. Washington
San Bernardino
Tel.: 51.5137, 52.9220
Telex: 21627 AVILA VC
Fax: 52.3021
Services: 1,2,4,5,6,7,9,11,12,14
Price range: C

Campo Alegre (★★★)
2da. Calle de Campo Alegre
Con esquina Calle Páez
Campo Alegre
Tel.: 32.8028/5558/3946
Fax: 263-8795
Services: 7
Price range: D

Caracas Hilton (★★★★★)
Avda. Libertador y Sur 25
El Conde
Tel.: 575.1811, 571.3808, 574.1122/2122
Telex: 21171 HILTE VC
Cable: HILTELS
Fax: 575.0024
Services: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,12,14
Price range: A

CCCT (★★★★)
Centro Ciudad Comercial Tamanaco
Avda. Principal La Estancia
Chuao
Tel.: 959.3098/1944/0611
Telex: 29815 ACCTV VC, 21991 VENANTUR
Fax: 261.4122
Services: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,12,14
Price range: C

↔Coliseo (★★★)
Avda. Casanova entre Calle Coromoto
y 1ra. Calle Bello Monte
Bello Monte
Tel.: 762.7916/7919
Fax: 761.7333
Services: 5,6,7,13
Price range: D

Continental Altamira (★★★)
Avda. San Juan Bosco
Altamira
Tel.: 262.0243, 261.6019/7043
Telex: 24367 CONTI VC
Fax: 262.2163
Services: 5,7,9
Price range: C

↔Crillon
Avda. Libertador
Entre Avdas. Acacias y Jabillos
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 761.4411-4415
Fax: 761.6911
Telex: 21203 HOCRI VC
Services: 5,7,13, no parking
Price range: D

↔Cuarta Avda. Suites
4ta. Avda. de Los Palos Grandes
Entre 1ra. y 2da. Transversal
Tel.: 284.6060, 285.3550/0808, 283.6135
Fax: 285.5252
Services: 1,7,13, no bar or restaurant
Price range: C

↔El Cid
Avda. San Felipe
Entre 1ra. y 2da. Transversal
La Castellana
Tel.: 263.2611, 987.8133
Services: 13
Price range: D

El Condor (★★★)
3ra. Avda. Las Delicias
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 762.9911/9915,
Telex: 28407
Services: 5,7
Price range: D

El Marques (★★★)
Avda. El Samán con esquina Calle Yuruari
El Marqués
Tel.: 242.0011/0210/0067
Telex: 24530 ALDOR VC
Fax: 242.0047
Services: 2,3,5,6,7
Price range: D

Eurobuilding Caracas (★★★★★)
Calle La Guairita
Chuao
Tel.: 907.1111, 959.1133, 993.3060
Telex: 27579 EUROB VC
Fax: 907.2189/2013, 993.9285
Services: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,12,14
Price range: A

Hotel Altamira (★★★)
Avda. José Felix Sosa
Altamira Sur
Tel.: 31.4255/4284/4335/4371
Fax:: 31.1926
Services: 1,5,7,9
Price range: D/E

Hotel Atlantida (★★★)
Avda. La Salle
Los Caobos
Tel.: 793.3211, 761.3204, 71.5254
Telex: 28632 ATLAN VC
Fax: 781.3696
Services: 1,5,7, no bar
Price range: D

Hotel Bruno (★★★)
Avda. Sur de Las Acacias
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 781.8444/8821
Services: 5
Price range: D

Hotel City (★★★)
Avda. Bolivia (al lado de Torre La Previsora)
Los Caobos
Tel.: 793.0753/1937, 782.7501/4334
Fax: 782.6354
Services: 7
Price range: D/E

Hotel Plaza Catedral (★★★)
Esquina La Torre
Boulevard Plaza Bolívar
Centro
Tel.: 564.2111, 563.7122/7311
Fax: 564.1797
Services: 7, no parking
Price range: D/E

•+Hotel Residencial Montserrat
Plaza Sur
Altamira
Tel.: 263.3533
Fax: 261.1394
Services: 7,13
Price range: D/E

•+Hotel Residencias Taormina
Avda. María Teresa Toro
Al lado del Edif. CANTV
Las Acacias
Tel.: 62.7851/4811
Fax: 61.4994
Services: 7,13, no bar, restaurant or parking
Price range: D

Hotel Savoy (★★★)
Avda. Francisco Solano con Avda. Las Delicias
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 762.1971-1979
Telex: 21301 SAVOY VC
Fax: 762.2792
Services: 1,,7, no bar
Price range: D

Karibik (★★★)
Avda. Las Delicias
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 762.9961-9969
Fax: 762.5549
Services: 1,4,5,7
Price range: C/D

Kursaal (★★★)
Avda. Casanova
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 762.2922-2926
Fax: 762.5715
Price range: D

La Floresta (★★★)
Avda. Avila
Plaza Sur, Altamira
Tel.: 284.4111
Fax: 261.1243
Services: 1,5,7,8
Price range: D

Las Americas (★★★)
Calle Los Cerritos
Final de Avda. Casanova
Bello Monte
Tel.: 951.7387/7985/7133/7596
Telex: 21497 AMERH VC
Fax: 262.1243
Services: 5,7,9
Price range: D

Las Antillas (★★★★)
2da. Avda. con Calles 1 y 2
Centro Comercial Uslar
Montalban, La Vega
Tel.: 442.0244/0336/0055
Fax: 442.4096
Telex: 29907 VC
Services: 1,5,7
Price range: C

↔Las Taparitas
Avda. Principal Las Palmas, Calle San Camilo
La Florida
Tel.: 782.6533/3090, 783.1385
Fax: 781.8632
Telex: 27959 HOTUN VC
Services: 5,13, no television, restaurant
Price range: D

↔Lincoln Suites
Avda. Francisco Solano (entre Los Jabillos y Geronimo)
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 762.8575/6831
Fax: 762.5503
Services: 1,5,7
Price range: C

Paseo Las Mercedes (★★★★)
Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.0444/0033, 92.2797
Fax: 993.0341
Telex: 23127 HINCA VC
Services: 2,3,4,5,7,9
Price range: B/C

Plaza Palace (★★★★)
Avda. Los Mangos, Las Delicias
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 762.4821-4828
Telex: 24129 HOPLA VC
Fax: 762.6375
Services: 1,5,7
Price range: D

President (★★★★★)
Avda. Valparaíso, Los Caobos
Tel.: 708.8111, 782.6622/6390
Telex: 29037 PARDO VC
Fax: 782.6144/6458
Services: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,14
Price range: B

↔Santa Fe Suite Garden (★★★★★)
Avda. José María Vargas
Santa Fe Norte
Tel.: 979.8355/8033/8044
Telex: 27889 STAFE VC
Fax: 979.6580
Services: 4,5,6,7,9,12,13,14, no air conditioning
Price range: B/C

Tamanaco Inter-Continental (★★★★★)
Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 208.7000/7111
Telex: 23260 TAMAN VC
Cable: INHOELCOR
Fax: 208.7116/7004
Services: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,12,14
Price range: A

Tampa (★★★★)
Avda. Francisco Solano López
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 762.3771/3779
Telex: 24403 TAMPA VC
Fax: 762.0112
Services: 5,7
Price range: C

HOTELS IN MARACAIBO

(Tel. area code is 061.)

Apart-Hotel Presidente
Avda. 11 No.68-50
Tel.: 83.122-137
Services: 2,4,5,7,9,13,14
Price range: B/C

Cabimas International (★★★★)
Avda. Andrés Bello
Sector Ambrosio
Cabimas
Tel.: (064) 45.692/694/703
Services:1,4,5,6,7,8,9
Price range: C

Hotel El Paseo (★★★★)
Cerca Avda. Milagro, entrada en Avda. 2
Tel.: 91.9444
Services: 1,5,7,8,9 (Venezuela's only revolving restaurant)
Price range: B

Hotel Del Lago Inter-Continental (★★★★★)
Avda. El Milagros
Tel.: 91.2022/9000 or in Caracas at (02) 92.4522
Services: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,11,12,14
Price range: A

Hotel Maruma (★★★★★)
Circunvalación 2
En frente de Industrial Zone
Tel.: 34.9011/7858/7086
Services: 1,4,5,7,8,11,12,14
Price range: A

Hotel Kristoff (★★★★)
Avda. 8 entre Calles 68 y 69
Tel.: 76.111-113, 72.917-919
Services: 2,3,4,5,7,8,9,14
Price range: B

Hotel Las Delicias
No. 68-58, Avda. 1
Tel.: 57.9378
Services: 2,4,5,7,9,13,14
Price range: B/C

Maracaibo Cumberland (★★★★)
No. 4-150, Calle 86A
Tel.:(064) 22.9444/2224
Fax: 21.3826
Services: 1,4,5,7,8
Price range: D

La Tierra del Sol
No. 87-125, Avda. 4
Tel.: 23.0521/0921/0581/0865
Fax: 22.9204
Services: 1,6,11
Price range: D

Stay in Maracaibo

Long Term Special

HOTEL DEL LAGO INTER-CONTINENTAL

Stay with us,
special price on
a minimum of one month
in a double or single room
and enjoy the advantages
of this novel plan:

- Daily buffet breakfast
for one person in
EL PATIO RESTAURANT.

- Privilege to use our
ACTION CLUB
INTERNATIONAL SPA
and our sports installations:
racketball courts, volleyball,
jogging trail, sauna
and swimming pool.
With the excellence
of the best service,
Uniquely Inter - Continental.

DEL LAGO INTER-CONTINENTAL
40 AÑOS
MARACAIBO

Surprisingly Affordable

Reservations: 58 - 61 - 924022 / 924222
Maracaibo - Venezuela

HOTELS IN VALENCIA

(Tel. area code is 041.)

Don Pelayo (★★★)
Avda. Diaz Moreno
Entre Calle Rondón y Vargas
Tel.: 80/678, 83.369
Services: 5
Price range: B/C

Excelsior (★★)
No. 113-63, Avda. Bolívar
Tel.: 21.4055
Services: -
Price range: D

Hotel Inter-Continental Valencia (★★★★★)
Calle Juan Uslar
La Viña
Tel.: 21.1033
Services: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,12,14
Price range: A

Hotel Stauffer (★★★★)
Avda. Bolívar Norte
El Recreo
Tel.: 67.3333/5522/0057
Fax: 67.0553
Services: 2,3,4,5,6,7,9
Price range: B/C

Le Paris (★★★)
No. 125-92
Avda. Bolívar
Tel: 21.5555
Services: 3
Price range: C

Residencias Aparthotel Ucaima Suites (★★★★)
Avda. Boyaca
La Viña
Tel.: 22.7011
Services: 5,7,9,11,13
Price range: A/B

CHAPTER IV

GETTING AROUND

DRIVING IN VENEZUELA

The comprehensive network of public transportation means that it is possible to both get around Caracas and to travel out of the city without a vehicle. However, most foreign residents find a car virtually indispensable.

Venezuela has a complete network of highways and connecting roads, and all important routes are paved. Service stations can be found in nearly all parts of the country. Some principal routes, such as Caracas-La Guaira and Caracas-Valencia, are tollways. Traffic keeps to the right of the road. Road quality is variable. Even Caracas has its share of car-eating potholes and missing manhole covers. A branch or clump of tall grass in the road usually has been placed there to mark a large hole or missing manhole cover, or to warn of an accident or broken-down car ahead.

During the rainy season, from May to November, some areas of the country, especially the *llanos* or plains, suffer from heavy flooding, and roads may become impassable. Drivers not accustomed to dirt roads in poor conditions may encounter difficulties, especially when handling a non-four-wheel-drive vehicle.

Visibility deteriorates rapidly during rainstorms and even in the capital, slippery conditions develop quickly as mud, dust, oil, and water combine to form an extremely slick surface.

A particularly slippery road surface known as the *mancha negra,* or black spot, results from the combination of heavy traffic, tropical heat and the use of poor-quality road surfacing material. Stretches of *mancha negra* are found on the toll road to Caracas from La Guaira and on uphill grades in the Caracas-Valencia tollway.

Poor road surfaces are not the only driving hazard; many Venezuelan drivers do not observe what most foreigners would consider simple road courtesy or road safety. Very few use turn signals, and many routinely run red lights or head the wrong way on one-way streets. Highway shoulders and breakdown lanes, where they exist, often become de facto high-speed lanes. Flared tempers, blaring horns, and bent fenders are part of the daily driving scene, particularly in Caracas.

Defensive driving and preparation for anything is advisable. The car on the right usually has the right of way. *Por puestos*, or small buses, must be carefully watched, since they are

JUNGLE HIGHWAYS - Finding a way through the rain forest.

constantly pulling over to deposit passengers wherever requested - despite rules regarding official stopping points. Motorcycles zip through traffic using the space between lanes, and drive the wrong way on one-way streets.

Likewise, pedestrians often leap into traffic, walking along and even across multi-lane highways. This bad habit is reinforced by the general failure to respect crossing lights. Street vendors wander through lanes of traffic and in rush-hour traffic jams to sell everything from fresh vegetables to screwdrivers.

It is wise to keep all doors locked and windows rolled up while driving in Caracas, since thieves have been reported to reach into open vehicles and snatch handbags and parcels off seats. Strict enforcement of traffic laws has been stepped up in recent years in an effort to cut Venezuela's soaring rate of traffic-related deaths, but it is still rare to see motorists pulled over for violations. Police vigilance is more noticeable during holiday periods when highways are crammed with vacationers who flock to the beaches or mountains. Cars are frequently stopped at police road blocks or *alcabalas* along major routes.

All vehicles are required to carry the following equipment: spare tire, wheel block, jack, lug wrench and special reflector triangle, which is to be placed on the road 50 meters behind stalled or inoperative cars after an accident or breakdown. Although not obligatory, police have been known to inspect cars for fire extinguishers and first-aid kits.

Laws to watch out for include one making it illegal to walk along the road with a container of gas. Anti-arson regulations also make it illegal for gas station attendants to sell gasoline other than that dispensed directly into vehicles' gas tanks.

Most left turns are illegal unless indicated by a green arrow. The driver is expected to turn right and go around the block.

Drivers should also be prepared at all times to show their driver's license, medical certificate, *cédula* and *carnet de circulación* to police authorities.

Although seldom enforced, Venezuela does have legal speed limits (given in kilometers per hour) for motor vehicles. One kilometer is equal to 0.6 of a mile. Where not posted, the following rules generally apply:

Urban streets and roads: Maximum speed limit 40 kph except near schools, hospitals, military installations, etc., where the limit is 15 kph.

Autopistas: 80 kph in the left or passing lane; 60 kph in the right lane.

Rural roads: 60 kph in the daytime, and 50 kph at night.

Caracas, like any other big city, has a serious parking problem. Space for street parking is at a minimum and it is common to find cars left on the sidewalk blocking pedestrians' way, which is in violation of the law. It is wise to avoid parking in the street wherever possible, and particularly at night, because of the city's high car-theft rate.

Parking lots usually charge a set rate for the first hour and a fractional amount for subsequent hours. Most commercial centers have either outdoor or underground parking lots. At some, shoppers who have their parking ticket stamped at one of the stores will receive one hour's free parking or a discount rate.

(For road and driving terms in Spanish, see "Appendix," page 462.)

ORIENTATION

Many kinds of traffic signs, including route names and numbers, street names, direction arrows and the like, are often difficult to find, since many are behind overgrown trees or

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

BUSINESS ROUTES - Cars drive into central Caracas.

shrubs. Signs are also frequently vandalized or otherwise damaged and not replaced promptly.

Addresses take time to find, especially since very few neighborhoods use street numbers. Most houses or *quintas*, apartment buildings or *residencias*, and office buildings or *edificios* are identified by name. In the center of the city, addresses are described by the two corners between which the building is located.

One good orientation tip is that the Mount Avila range is to the north.

Corpoven stations sell a good highway map, with half of the country on each side, for Bs.100 ($1.09) . National Rent-A-Car provides car renters with a free atlas and tourist guide, complete with maps of states and cities. A street guide is also included in the white pages of the Caracas phone book, and the Metroguía includes the names of the city's buildings in its comprehensive series of street maps.

More specialized maps for hiking and camping can be obtained through the Instituto Nacional de Parques (Inparques) at 238.3133. Detailed topographic maps can be obtained from the Dirección de Cartografía Nacional, Ministerio de Ambiente, Edif. Camejo (across from Pasaje Zingg), Piso 1, Oficina 111, Avda. Universidad. The office is open from 9:00 a.m - 4:00 p.m., though closed from 11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

CAR MAINTENANCE

All gas stations in urban areas operate from about 6:00 a.m. to at least 9:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Like pharmacies, they take turns operating on the weekends and throughout the night. After opening hours, gas can be bought at stations activated by an automatic teller card. For security reasons, a number of stations have opened that only accept credit cards.

Stations on the country's main highways operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Although gasoline prices nearly doubled in February 1989, and progressive increases have been enacted since then, gas is still inexpensive. Per-liter prices are set according to the fuel's octane rating but they average Bs.6 ($.05) per liter, making gas about $.25 (Bs.27) a gallon.

Vigilance is recommended at gas stations to ensure honest service. Attendants sometimes say that the car needs oil, water, or air in the tires when none is required. Nor does the gas pump always register zero at the start of a sale. Attendants are usually tipped Bs.15-20 ($.17-.21) if they have washed the windshield.

Although car dealerships have their own after-sales service workshops, many people prefer to use specialty workshops, especially for specific technical repairs such as air-conditioning units. There are several repair and body shops in Caracas where English is spoken, but it is best to get references from friends.

Outside Caracas, tire replacement and mechanic services are available on weekends and on holidays, but spare-part stores are often closed. Therefore, standard equipment should be carried, including an extra set of spark plugs, fan belt, distributor cap, condensor, windshield wiper blades and a spare set of radiator hoses. Several cans of oil, automatic transmission fluid, a gallon jug of water and brake fluid should always be carried, since they are frequently unavailable as well.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

HORSING AROUND - Mules and packhorses provide a traditional type of transport to Los Nevados in the Andes.

Locally made car batteries are only guaranteed for 90 days and to replace them under warranty usually requires a trip to the factory.

(For car maintenance terms in Spanish, see "Appendix," page 462.)

CAR RENTAL

Car-rental offices of the main agencies are scattered conveniently around Caracas and at Simón Bolívar International Airport. In addition, there are rental desks at the Caracas Hilton, Tamanaco Inter-Continental, Hotel Eurobuilding, Hotel Paseo Las Mercedes and Hotel Avila. In other towns around Venezuela, it is often easier to rent cars at the airport.

Most vehicles are equipped with air conditioning. Four-wheel drives are available for rough terrain and are useful even near Caracas, where some of the more interesting sights are at hard-to-reach spots.

Charges are by the day, plus a kilometer rate and insurance coverage. To rent a car, some companies, such as National, have a 21-year-old minimum age limit, while others, such as Hertz, require drivers to be 25 years old. The driver must also have on hand his passport or *cédula*, a valid driver's license (Venezuelan, international or from the country of origin) and proof of financial means, such as a major credit card. Drivers should check that they have the *carnet de circulación* in case they are stopped by the traffic police.

Reservations may be made at any travel agency or at the central office. If the reservation is made beforehand in the United States, the daily rate and insurance will be the same but the traveler may be able to arrange for unlimited free mileage. Car rentals are considerably more expensive here than in the United States. The cheapest model that can be rented in Caracas costs about Bs.6,500 ($71.43) per day.

Major rental agencies are listed below:

Aco, S.A.
Caracas
Edif. ACO
Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.9166/8145/8511
Maracaibo
86-A86, Avda. 4 Bella Vista
Frente de ACO Occidente
Tel.: 22.6585
Valencia
No. 98-68, Avda. Cedeño
Al lado de Dota Publicidad
Tel.: 57.828

ACO handles a wide variety of brands, including Chevrolet, Ford, Toyota, and Volkswagen. Daily, weekly, weekend, and monthly rates are available. Offices are located in Ciudad Bolívar, Barquisimeto, Maracaibo, Margarita, Maturín, Puerto La Cruz, Puerto Ordaz, and Valencia, as well as in Caracas and at Simón Bolívar International Airport in Maiquetía.

Avis
Caracas
Final Avda. Libertador
Bello Campo
Tel.: 261.4532/5556
Fax: 32.4270
Maracaibo
Aeropuerto Internacional La Chinita
Calle 72
Las Delicias
Tel. and fax: 29.2897
Valencia
Aeropuerto Internacional Arturo Michelena
Tel. and fax: 34.8896

Avis handles Buick, Fiat, Ford, Jeep, Mitsubishi, Renault, and Toyota. Besides standard passenger models, Avis offers four-wheel drive vehicles, vans and pick-up trucks. A number of branches are located in Caracas and there are offices in Barcelona, Barquisimeto, Maracaibo, Maracay, Margarita, Puerto Ordaz, San Cristóbal, Valencia and at the airport in Maiquetía.

Budget
Caracas
Quinta Los Irunes, No. 50
Avda. Luis Roche entre Transversal 5 y 6
Altamira
Tel.: 284.0023
Fax: 284.7504
Maracaibo
No. 13-08, Calle 76 con Avda. 13
Tel.: 70.107
Fax: 33.107
Valencia
Avda. Bolívar Norte
Tel.: 21.5636
Fax: 22.7164

Budget handles Chevrolet, Fiat, Ford, Jeep, Mitsubishi and Toyota. Mitsubishi vans and Ford pick-up trucks are available. Branches are located in Barcelona, Barinas, Barquisimeto, Carúpano, Ciudad Bolívar, Coro, Cumaná, El Vigía, Las Piedras, Maracaibo, Maracay, Margarita, Maturín, Mérida, Puerto La Cruz, Puerto Ordaz, Punta de Mata, San Cristóbal, San Tomé, San Antonio de Táchira and Valencia, as well as in Caracas and at Simón Bolívar International Airport in Maiquetía.

Tiene variedad de modelos

A la hora de reservar, Hertz le da la mayor variedad de modelos para que usted pueda escoger el que más le conviene, con el mejor servicio en reservaciones, y todo lo que necesita, porque en Hertz tenemos para usted la satisfacción de un servicio de prestigio.

Reservaciones: Tlf: 952.55.11 (MASTER)

Claro... es

Hertz

La satisfacción de un servicio de prestigio

Pegaso HERTZ-03/91

Hertz
Caracas
Edif. Pichincha, Piso 5
Avda. Principal El Bosque
Con esquina Avda. Francisco Solano
Chacaíto
Tel.: 952.1603/1607
Fax: 952.1846/8611 ext.215/239
Maracaibo
Avda. 15 Las Delicias con Calle 84
Tel.: 51.1251
Fax: 51.8035
Valencia
Centro Comercial Paseo Las Industrias
Zona Industríal
Tel.: 34.3913/1271
Fax: 34.3914

Hertz handles Chevrolet, Fiat, Ford, Renault, and Toyota models. The agency has several offices in Caracas and is also located in Anaco, Barcelona, Barquisimeto, Cabimas, Ciudad Ojeda, El Tigre, El Vigía, Maracaibo, Maracay, Margarita, Maturín, Mérida, Puerto Cabello, Puerto La Cruz, Puerto Ordaz, Punto Fijo, San Cristóbal, San Tomé and Valencia.

National
Caracas
Centro Los Ruice
Edif. National, Local 5
Avda. Diego Cisneros
Tel.: 239.3645/1134, 34.4611/4615
Fax: 239.4119
Maracaibo
Aeropuerto Internacional La Chinita
Salida Nacional
Tel.: 52.5468
Fax: 34.4486
Valencia
Avda. Cedeño
Tel.: 57.9220/9106
Fax: 57.9590

National offers the most extensive network of car-rental offices in the country. Services are available in all principal cities and airports, and also at major hotels in Caracas, Valencia and Maracaibo, with more than 90 offices nationwide. Vehicles available include Chevrolet, Fiat, Ford, Isuzu, Mitsubishi, Renault and Toyota, in all categories from economy through luxury, including four-wheel drive vehicles and pick-up trucks. The company also provides facilities in remote areas such as San Fernando de Apure, Puerto Ayacucho (Amazonas state), Los Pijiguaos (Bolívar state) and Guiria (Peninsula de Paria in Sucre state).

CAR PURCHASE

Four-wheel drive vehicles are very popular, since Venezuela has beach and mountain trails that cannot be reached without one - as well as steep streets and driveways in Caracas. However, these are also the kinds of vehicles most likely to be stolen.

Ostentatious models can be difficult to service and are tempting to thieves. Anti-theft devices such as alarm systems, gas flow cut-offs and floor-to-steering-wheel bars, are necessary, especially since most insurance companies will not insure for more than civil responsibility without at least one such device.

Other features worth considering are anti-lock brakes, air conditioning and a removable radio/cassette deck to prevent theft.

NEW CARS

Fiat, Ford, General Motors, Jeep, Mitsubishi, Renault, and Toyota have local assembly plants that offer a wide range of domestically-produced models. Imported cars include these makes as well as Honda, Lada, Mercedes Benz, BMW, Hyundai, Peugeot and Volkswagen. The British Mini has recently made an entry into the Venezuelan market, although it is expensive. Generally speaking, companies that assemble as well as import cars have a better record for supplying spare parts for their models than have companies that only import cars, since they are required by law to provide parts for seven years for each model assembled here.

All gasoline in Venezuela is leaded, so imported vehicles should have motor adjustments to run on this fuel.

New car prices vary from around Bs.600,000 ($6,593.40) for a very basic Lada to over Bs.2 million ($21,978.04) for a high-end Mitusbishi. Luxury models such as the commonly seen Mercedes Benz start at around $45,000 (Bs.4,095,000). New cars come with a guarantee, a set of license plates, a certificate of origin, and a receipt for payment of the first quarter of the municipal road tax or *impuesto trimestral.*

(For car imports, see "Automobiles," page 64.)

USED CARS

Used cars are advertised in newspaper classified advertising sections, listed according to asking price. It is recommended that they be checked by a reputable mechanic before purchase, since they are sold without guarantees and may have serious mechanical or structural defects not immediately apparent. The car should be equipped with seat belts, at least in the front seats, which are mandatory under Venezuelan law, although they are rarely used. Sometimes, it is almost impossible to buy spare parts for old cars because the make and model is no longer sold in Venezuela.

It is very easy to accidentally buy a stolen car, since the national system for keeping track of titles is not efficient. It may be necessary to carry out a title search to ascertain a car's history.

It is difficult to find any sort of vehicle, no matter how battered and old, for less than Bs.150,000 ($1,645.35). Prices normally range between Bs.450,000 ($4,945.05) and Bs.800,000 ($8,791.20) for an older down-scale model in relatively good shape.

The red tape involved in purchasing a used car is both complicated and time-consuming. An authorized *gestoría de automovilismo* can facilitate all matters regarding car purchase documentation.

(For a list of Gestorías, see "Yellow Pages," page 441.)

Quinta Inspectoría de Tránsito
Avda. Francisco Javier Yanes
(Cerca Crema Paraíso)
San Bernardino
Tel. 52.0813/1431/3691
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

Note: Venezuelans as well as foreigners frequently "purchase" a valid driving license through an intermediary, though this is illegal.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATES

Known as *certificado médico para conducir*, these are given to drivers after they are checked for blood pressure, distance vision and color blindness. Photo identification is needed to obtain the certificate, which costs Bs.400 ($4.40) to drive a car for private purposes, and must be renewed annually.

Three conveniently located offices include:

El Cafetal
Centro Comercial Plaza Las Américas
Final de Blvd. Raúl Leoni
Tel.: 987.6634
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

Montecristo
Centro Comercial Los Dos Caminos, Piso 2
Avda. Rómulo Gallegos
Tel.: 35.2252
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

Prados del Este
Edif. La Pirámide, Planta Baja, Local 12
(Detras de Centro Comercial Concresa)
Tel.: 979.9557
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

People who are color blind or have other handicaps need to go to the following office:
Federación Médica de Venezuela
Edif. Colegio de Médicos del Distrito Federal, Piso 3
Avda. José María Vargas (al lado de Hotel Santa Fé Suite Garden)
Santa Fé
Tel. 979.7580/5986

MUNICIPAL ROAD TAX

The municipal road tax, called *impuesto trimestral*, is paid by car owners either quarterly or annually. It is based on a sliding scale, according to the weight and make of the vehicle. It is usually between Bs.100 ($1.09) and Bs.200 ($2.19).

The tax form may be picked up at the following Rentas Municipales offices, which are in the Departmento de Impuestos Sobre Vehículos:

Distrito Federal
Edif. Renta Municipal
Esq. Dr. Glorieta,
El Centro
Tel.: 481.4260/9404

Distrito Sucre
Centro Comercial Concresa
Primer Nivel, Oficina 308-A
Prados Del Este
Tel.: 979.8824/8690

The completed form and payment must be taken to an authorized bank, and the canceled receipt kept as evidence of payment. An authorized *gestoría de automovilismo* will handle all automobile tax paperwork for clients.

INSURANCE

Although automobile insurance is compulsory, many Venezuelan drivers do not carry it. Therefore, full comprehensive insurance is strongly recommended, which will cover every contingency in the event of accidents, as well as loss or damage caused by theft. Theft insurance is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain due to Venezuela's high auto-theft crime rate. To qualify, the car needs to be fitted with one or more security devices. Full coverage insurance is relatively expensive, averaging 10-15 percent of the car's value.

Third-party coverage pertains to civil responsibility only, and costs for defence against a criminal charge are covered by the insurance company.

Policy exclusions are common. An insurance company may not cover costs if the policy holder freely admits responsibility in an accident without the written approval of the insurance company, if the holder provoked the accident or was an accomplice, was driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, was driving without proper documentation, or provided false or inexact information in the event of an accident. Also, losses might not be covered if the policy holder does not notify the insurance company of an accident promptly in writing within three days or if the loss was caused by a hurricane, earthquake, flood, strike, riot or civil commotion, though specific coverage may be purchased to cover these incidents.

EMERGENCY ACTION

ACCIDENTS

Cars should not be moved if involved in an accident. The law requires that vehicles should remain in the accident position until a Traffic Police officer arrives. Furthermore, insurance companies are generally unable to pay claims on automobiles that have been moved without a Traffic Police accident report. The best action to take is to stay at the scene of the accident and request that someone call the Traffic Police (Tel.: 167).

In the event of an accident, the following procedure should be followed:

- Obtain the license plate numbers of all vehicles involved and the complete names, *cédula* numbers and addresses of the drivers, vehicle owners and insurance companies and passengers and witnesses. The name and number of the attending Traffic Police officer should also be noted.
- Blame should not be assumed nor information offered about the accident, except when requested by the authorities. The only declarations that should be signed are those by the insurance company representative.
- The Traffic Police officer should make an accurate drawing of the accident, noting the exact position of the vehicles and the names and addresses of all witnesses.
- Any traffic tickets should be read carefully. A citation will normally be issued to both drivers involved in the accident. This citation obliges the drivers to appear at a particular Traffic Police station on a given date.
- The car must be driven or towed to El Llanito Transit Authority headquarters in El Llanito, to have the damage evaluated (*experticia*) by transit authorities.
- Insurance companies should be notified of the accident as soon as possible. The company will want to send an adjuster to examine the car for damages and authorize repairs, so repairs should not be made without the insurer's consent.

Anyone involved in an accident that results in injuries or deaths will be detained under temporary arrest, and the vehicles will be impounded. Any information such as name, age, address and occupation of the injured party should be noted.

The release of both driver and vehicle can only be obtained when two people go forward to guarantee any costs for which the driver may ultimately be responsible. These people should first have determined where and when the injured party received medical treatment and the seriousness of the injuries, and have applied for the driver and the vehicle's release at the Inspectoría de Tránsito where the accident was recorded.

There are specialized traffic lawyers who can help speed up this process. Automobile insurance companies usually have names available, and the Touring y Automóvil Club de Venezuela has legal counsel available for consultation in the case of an accident (see below).

BREAKDOWNS

Tow trucks are stationed along the Caracas-Valencia and the Caracas-La Guaira highways and cruise the freeways around the capital, ready to assist in breakdowns.

Commercial tow trucks are also listed under *grúas* in the Caracas Metropolitan telephone book's Yellow Pages, or can be reached by calling the Traffic Police (Tel.: 167).

Members of the Touring y Automóvil Club de Venezuela are allowed a Bs.2,500 ($27.47) reimbursement for tows in Venezuela.

CARS TOWED AWAY FOR PARKING INFRACTIONS

Illegally parked cars are generally ignored, but periodically, especially on Fridays and just before the end of the month, an *operación relámpago* is conducted, where fleets of tow trucks accompanied by transit authorities make a sweep of certain areas, hauling away all vehicles. The authorities are supposed to leave an indication written in chalk on the street or sidewalk to say which police parking lot the car has been taken to. Since this is infrequently done, the usual procedure is to ask at the nearest shop where cars towed away from the area are normally taken.

The impound lot should be visited with the driver's *carnet de circulación* and *cédula*. The car should be asked for by license plate number, and a towing and parking ticket of around $5 (Bs.455) will be issued. This must be paid at a different location.

THEFT

The theft of vehicles should be reported immediately to the nearest Technical Police or Policía Técnica Judicial (PTJ) office, where the owner will be asked to file a claim or *denuncia*. The driver must present the *carnet de circulación* to prove ownership, a valid driving license and medical certificate. The owner's responsibility for the car continues until the theft is reported to the police.

The police will give the car owner a receipt, a copy of which should be attached to the car theft report for the insurance company. It is essential that the owner keep the PTJ receipt as a means of official identification, should the stolen vehicle be recovered.

TOURING Y AUTOMOVIL CLUB DE VENEZUELA

This club gives its members a range of serices, from obtaining documentation to offering discounts. Membership fees are about $100 (Bs.9,100) per family with one car, with each additional car costing about $30 (Bs.2,730).

Information and aid is given on importing and exporting vehicles, documentation within Venzuela, and international driver's licenses. The club also operates as an insurance consultant and provides legal assistance in accident cases. Discounts include 20 percent off car rental with National, Avis, Hertz, and Budget agencies, special rates for car maintenance

Photo © Elizabeth Kline

HIGH FLYERS - Private plane owners use La Carlota airport as an air-taxi base.

and a $27.47 (Bs.2,500) reimbursement for tows within Venezuela, with a maximum of two reimbursements per year per car. A manual of traffic laws and regulations is produced in addition to a bi-monthly publication and information bulletins.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

INTERCITY TRANSPORT

The lack of an adequate rail network in Venezuela means that buses are the most common means of transportation among the country's cities and towns.

In Caracas, most intercity buses depart from the Nuevo Circo bus terminal in Avda. Vicente Lecuna, by La Hoyada metro station near downtown.

Seats are rarely reserved, but are instead obtained by the simple system of turning up and waiting until the bus is full. For this reason, early morning is usually the best bet for a rapid departure. However, a wait of two hours before all the seats are occupied is not uncommon during quiet periods. Those crying out specific bus destinations at the station are generally helpful and will direct travelers to the correct area.

Even when reservations are made, it is wise to turn up well before the scheduled departure time, since the schedule is not often kept. During busy holiday periods, service continues around the clock and seats may be difficult to obtain.

Two new, modern bus terminals capable of handling thousands of passengers daily are expected to open in late 1993. The one expected to serve the eastern part of the country is located on the freeway to Guarenas, to the east of Caracas. The other, at La Bandera in western Caracas, is to serve the western routes.

One luxury bus line, Aeroexpresos Ejecutivos, offers routes from Caracas to Valencia and Puerto La Cruz, with several daily departures. Reservations must be made in advance by calling 33.9011/3601 in Caracas, or the cellular line 014-40.5010 in Valencia. This bus line is air conditioned, has on-board TV, and offers coffee or juice during the trip. Tickets are about double the price of a regular bus journey, at Bs.490 ($5.38) a single, but travelers report that the excellent service makes the outlay worthwhile. Aeroexpresos Ejecutivos leaves from Quinta Marluz, Avda. Principal de Bello Campo (about mid-way between the Chacao and Altamira Metro stops).

In 1992, construction began on a passenger rail system that will eventually extend to the cities of the Tuy Valley to the south and east of Caracas, west to Valencia, and from Valencia northwest to Puerto Cabello. The first leg, between Caracas and Cúa, is expected to be completed in about four years.

Flying is a relatively cheap and efficient way of getting around Venezuela. Small airports are scattered around the country, and the airlines Avensa, Servivensa and Aeropostal serve most areas among them. A return flight from Caracas to Mérida in the Andes costs Bs.7,200 ($79.12), and a return to Ciudad Bolívar is Bs.6,200 ($68.13).

Airport taxes are levied for national flights, at Bs.40 ($.43) per person, although in Mérida, the price is double. There are several flights a day to the larger towns but delays and cancellations are common. Avensa flights tend to be slightly more expensive than those offered by other airlines for a single ticket.

One of the drawbacks of air travel is that flights tend to go via Caracas, so for instance to fly from Mérida to Ciudad Bolívar is only possible via the capital. **(For more information on air travel, see "Air," page 39.)**

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

RHYTHM OF THE METRO - Running east to west through the capital is the high-speed train system, modeled after the Paris Metro.

Several airplane charter companies operate out of La Carlota Airport in the heart of Caracas. One is Aeroejecutivos, at Hangar 5, Aeroclub de Caracas (Tel.: 91.7942/9286, fax: 993.5493).

Two regional airlines have recently initiated service from Valencia. Aserca (Tel.: 34.3748) which boasts special business class attention for all passengers and has flights to major cities in Venezuela, and JD de Valencia (Tel.: 32.0705) with such destinations as Miami, Aruba and Colombia.

TRANSPORT IN CARACAS

METRO

Caracas' high-speed Metro system is considered to be the most modern in Latin America, and averages more than one million passengers a day. In its 10 years of operation, the Metro has gradually expanded its network to 35 stations, covering 40 kilometers of the city. It serves 22 points between Propatria and Palo Verde (Line 1), and 13 points running from El Silencio to Zoológico and Las Adjuntas (Line 2).

A third line running south from Plaza Venezuela to El Valle is under construction and is expected to open in 1994. A 10-kilometer express route from the end of Line 2 at Las Adjuntas to Los Teques is also planned to be completed by the mid-1990s, though it will use a different type of train, running above ground.

The Metro is open seven days a week from 5:30 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. Tickets range in cost from Bs.18 ($.19) to Bs.25($.27), depending on the distance travelled, and can be purchased for exact change from automatic ticket machines or at ticket booths in any of the system's

well-marked stations. Less expensive multiple-ride tickets, known as *multiabonos*, give the regular Metro user 10 journeys with one ticket, without the need to repeatedly stand in long lines. Student fares are also available.

Travel in the sleek, French-made Metro coaches is swift, cutting cross-city travel time to a fraction of what it would take by car or bus. Trains are scheduled to slide into stations every three minutes during normal hours and every minute during peak demand periods.

Each of the seven air-conditioned cars that make up a train is intended to carry up to 60 seated and 120 standing passengers, although passengers are crammed in much more during rush hour. Capable of speeds up to 80 kilometers per hour, the trains usually travel between 40 and 60 kilometers per hour.

The stations themselves contain many works of art, with more than three dozen major works by renowned Venezuelan artists on permanent display. Of particular interest are Jesus Soto's enormous suspended sculpture at Plaza Brion in Chacaíto and Héctor Poleo's "El Nacimiento del Hombre" ("The Birth of Man") at the La Paz station. Many stations also offer temporary exhibits.

Food and beverages are not sold at the terminals and are not permitted on the trains. Stations do not have restrooms and smoking is prohibited.

Crime is not rampant in the Metro system, but complaints of pick-pockets operating on the escalators, particularly in the Bellas Artes terminal, are common. Working in pairs, one of the thieves will drop something on the moving stairs, and while a passenger is distracted, the second thief behind lifts the passenger's wallet.

Stations now in operation on the Metro's Line 1, crossing the city from west to east, are: Propatria, Pérez Bonalde, Plaza Sucre, Gato Negro, Agua Salud, Caño Amarillo, Capitolio, La Hoyada, Parque Carabobo, Bellas Artes, Colegio de Ingenieros, Plaza Venezuela, Sabana Grande, Chacaíto, Chacao, Altamira, Parque del Este, Los Dos Caminos, Los Cortijos, La California, Petare, and Palo Verde. With the exception of Agua Salud (at street level) and Caño Amarillo (elevated) all Metro stations on Line 1 are below ground.

The Metro's Line 2 stations currently in operation are Las Adjuntas, Ruíz Pineda, Zoológico, Caricuao, Mamera, Antímano, Carapita, La Yaguara, La Paz, Artigas, Maternidad, Capuchinos, and El Silencio. Passengers can transfer between the two lines at El Silencio (Line 2) and Capitolio (Line 1). Stations along Line 2 are a mixture of street-level and underground sites, with El Silencio the deepest station in the system.

METROBUS

The Metro system is interlinked with a network of MetroBuses whose fleet of smart vehicles serve the outlying areas. A flat-rate fare of Bs.25 ($.27) covers both the bus and Metro ride. Discounted multiple-use tickets combining both transport types are known as *multi-integrados*. In the current tough economic climate, plans are to expand the MetroBus system rather than to further develop the Metro beyond already designed plans.

There are currently 18 MetroBus routes in operation:

El Marques-La California-Macaracuay (001); Guarenas-Petare (011); Santa Paula-Caurimare-Los Cortijos (121); Bolaita-Los Cortijos (122); El Cafetal-Altamira (201); La Trinidad-Chacao (211); Las Mercedes-Chacaito (221); Sabana Grande-Colinas de Bello Monte (301); La Florida-Sabana Grande (302); Coche-Santa Mónica-Plaza Venezuela (311); Santa Mónica-Plaza Venezuela (312); San Rafael de La Florida-Plaza Venezuela (313); Las Palmas-Plaza Venezuela (314); Las Acacias-La Hoyada (402); El Valle-La Hoyada (405); San Bernadino-Bellas Artes (521); La Paz-Montalban-Antimano (601); and

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

IN A JAM - Getting caught up in Caracas traffic are a number of por puestos, small mini buses that cram the capital's streets.

La Paz-El Paraiso-Capitolio (602). A MetroBus service to Los Teques is expected to begin by the end of 1993.

For maps of the entire Metro/MetroBus system, call the Compañía Anónima Metro de Caracas (Tel.: 208.2111).

MINI-BUSES

MetroBuses are less prevalent in Caracas than the smaller minibuses called *por puestos* or *carritos,* which are owned and operated by private owners. *Por puestos* provide a convenient, fast and inexpensive means of transportation and many Caraqueños depend on them.

Each *por puesto* owner belongs to an association registered with the municipal authorities that has routes through a given part of the city. During rush hours, however, there are often far more passengers than available seats, so standing is common.

The names of the city sector of the last and intermediate stops are marked on a card in the *por puesto's* front window. Since the destinations advertised may not necessarily be accurate, it is a good idea to confirm the stop with the driver.

A central embarkation-debarkation point for eastern Caracas is at Chacaíto. Connections can be made there to other parts of the city either by *por puesto* or by Metro.

The fare, which is paid to the driver either on boarding or on reaching the destination, varies according to the distance traveled and is government-controlled. The minimum rate is Bs.10 ($.09), with a Bs.2 ($.2) addition at night and on weekends and holidays. Fares between different locations along the route are sometimes posted above the driver's head.

Por puestos are supposed to let passengers on and off only at official stops, but few obey this rule. They can be hailed by a wave and the driver must be told in advance where the passenger wants to be dropped off.

TAXIS

Cabs in Caracas are generally not equipped with functioning meters, which means that fares should be negotiated before the journey. The government has ruled that every taxi must be painted white and has to be fitted with a functioning meter by the end of 1993 but until the transition is made, haggling over fares will continue.

A minimum fare of Bs.150 ($1.65) is usually charged. Asking to be taken to one of the major hotels will generally result in a higher fare than asking to be taken to a building a short distance away. This disparity is particularly pronounced with airport fares, where passengers are urged to purchase a ticket at the taxi booth to assure a government-set fare to various parts of the city.

Official price boards in the airport show that fares to the five-star hotels can be double that of one to a destination a block away from the hotel. Taxi drivers do not expect to be tipped, although many people do add the odd change to the fare, especially for help with luggage.

The Transportation Ministry, which regulates taxi fares, has set higher fares for the taxi lines at major hotels. These taxis must maintain higher appearance standards and offer air conditioning.

Libres are taxis whose drivers are independents, as opposed to *línea* taxis which, while being owned and operated by private individuals, are members of an association whose name and phone number appear on the vehicle. *Línea* taxis generally operate out of a fixed site in each *urbanización*. Since they wait there to be called, they are more expensive than the average *libres*. Until all taxis are painted white, the only way to recognize an official cab compared with the many freelance taxis is by the yellow number plates.

There are several taxi companies in Caracas that operate a radio-controlled pick-up service. These are more expensive than other taxis, with set surcharges for pickup and late hours.

(For taxi numbers, see "Yellow Pages," page 453.)

TRANSPORT IN MARACAIBO

Maracaibo has just begun introducing buses on various routes around town. These complement the traditional service of cars acting as *por puestos* and circulate with great frequency along Avda. Milagros and all the other principal streets.

The Terminal de Pasajeros for inter-urban buses and *por puestos* is located on the east side of Avda. 15, just south of Calle 100 (Tel.: 22.3975).

TRANSPORT IN VALENCIA

Taxis can be found cruising the main avenues (particularly Avda. Bolívar) and parked adjacent to the main shopping centers and hotels, and the airport.

For longer trips, many peole prefer to use the services of the taxi lines serving the Hotel Stauffer Valencia (Tel.: 67.2870/3333), even though they are more expensive than other taxis, because they have much nicer vehicles, are contracted with greater care and are considered much more reliable. They can also be hired by the day.

Buses and mini-buses service every area of the city and can be flagged down at marked *paradas de buses* along main avenues. Inter-urban buses use the relatively new terminal at the eastern edge of Big Low Center. The center also contains numerous small shops and fast-food places to service travelers.

VIASA

EL CAMINO AL MUNDO

MIAMI
NUEVA YORK
HOUSTON
TORONTO
ARUBA
CURAÇAO
CANCUN
STO. DOMINGO
LA HABANA
BOGOTA
CARTAGENA
QUITO
LIMA
RIO DE JANEIRO
SAO PAULO
BUENOS AIRES
STGO. DE CHILE

MADRID
TENERIFE
STGO. DE COMPOSTELA
LISBOA
OPORTO
PARIS
ROMA
MILAN
LONDRES
AMSTERDAM
ZURICH
FRANKFURT

NADIE LO LLEVA A MAS DESTINOS DESDE VENEZUELA

Consulte a su Agente de Viajes, o a Viasa Reservaciones por el telf.: 576.26.11.

VIASA
LA LINEA AEREA DE VENEZUELA

This is especially true for those who don't know Spanish. Non-Spanish speakers are like two-year-olds in a new pre-school. They can't communicate and don't know any of the rules. However, unlike a pre-school, no one will sit down and explain the rules. The only way to pick them up is from other expatriates, from friendly locals and from making mistakes.

Non-working spouses often have a more difficult adjustment than their partners, particularly if they have left professions of their own behind and are under pressure to be the main emotional support for the newly relocated family.

A non-working spouse can make or break the stay, especially in those families with children. It is extremely important that the non-working spouse has the full emotional support of the working spouse. Younger children are very sensitive to their surroundings and will sense whether the family is adjusting.

The settling process for families can be aided by bringing personal items, such as treasured family photographs, on the plane rather than in the household shipment. A "stress-beating" food item, such as a favorite brand of peanut butter, may also be packed.

One of the best defenses against culture shock is to take advantage of the honeymoon period to allow the family to familiarize itself with the neighborhood, the city and the country. This period should involve early contact with Venezuelans and members of the foreign community. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to join a gym or country club or to get involved in one of the many community groups operating in the country's major cities. Getting a part-time job can also be helpful. Meet Venezuelans on their own turf, such as the building condominium board, neighborhood association or workplace. The more familiar one becomes with the Venezuelan lifestyle, the easier it becomes to understand.

Caraqueños are generally friendly and helpful to tourists and expatriates, particularly to those willing to attempt to speak their language and accept their ways. Remaining flexible is the key to survival. The unexpected should be expected and delays and adjustments should be anticipated. For many people, these differences are what make international life worthwhile.

EMBASSY REGISTRATION AND CONSULAR ASSISTANCE

Foreign citizens who expect to remain in Venezuela for any length of time are advised to register with the consular authorities of their embassy. Information such as the foreigner's name, address in Venezuela, and whom to notify in case of emergency is kept on file and serves to expedite matters if consular assistance should ever be requested. Services available at most consulates include birth registration and passport issuance for children born in Venezuela, passport renewal, death registration and lists of recommended lawyers, translators and doctors.

U.S. nationals resident in most parts of Venezuela should register at the consular section of the Caracas office of the U.S. Embassy, Avda. Francisco de Miranda and Avda. Principal de La Floresta. The embassy is one long block east of the Altamira Metro station and its hours for U.S. citizen issues are from 8:00 a.m. - noon and from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (Tel.: 285.3111/2222/2475, fax: 285.0336). It is usually less busy in the afternoon.

U.S. consular officers from Caracas periodically visit Valencia to handle routine tasks such as registering births and issuing passports. U.S. nationals resident in the states of Falcón, Mérida, Táchira, Trujillo and Zulia should register at the U.S. Consulate in Maracaibo, at Avda. 5 de Julio and Avda. 13. Hours for U.S. citizen issues are from 8:00 a.m. - noon and from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00

p.m. (Tel.: (061) 83.055, 84.253, fax: 52.4255).

British nationals resident in Venezuela should register with the consular section of the British Embassy, Piso 3, Edif. Torre Las Mercedes, Avda. La Estancia, Chuao. The hours are 8:30 a.m. - noon, Monday to Friday (Tel.: 993.4111, fax: 993.9989).

Canadians resident in Venezuela should register with their consulate at Torre Europa, Piso 7, Avda. Francisco de Miranda and Avda. Los Cortijos Chacao. Consular office hours are 1:00 - 4:00 p.m., Monday to Thursday. (Tel.: 951.6166/6171/4114, fax: 951.4950).

Australians resident in Venezuela should register with their consulate at Quinta Yolanda, Avda. Luis Roche, Altamira. Consular office hours are 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday to Thursday, and Friday 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Tel.: 261.4632/0658/5419, 263.4033, fax: 261.3448).

Many countries have honorary consuls located in other cities as well.

EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES

ALGERIA
Quinta Aures
Avda. Los Mangos
Los Chorros
Tel.: 284.8074, 283.7510

ARGENTINA
Edif. Fedecámaras, Piso 3
Calle Cupalme
El Bosque
Tel.: 731.3311

AUSTRALIA
Quinta Yolanda
Avda. Luis Roche
Entre 6ta. y 7ma. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 261.4632/0658/5419

AUSTRIA
Torre Las Mercedes
Piso 4, Oficina 408
Avda. La Estancia
Chuao
Tel.: 91.3863/3979, 92.2956

BARBADOS
Quinta Cataralia
Avda. 1
Campo Alegre
Tel.: 951.5501/6743/7402

BELGIUM
Quinta Azulita
Avda. 11
Entre 6ta. y 7ma. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 261.9397/0421, 262.3015

BOLIVIA
Quinta Embajada de Bolivia
Avda. Luis Roche
6ta.Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 261.4563, 263.3015

BRAZIL
Centro Gerencial Mohedano, Piso 6
Avda. Mohedano con Avda. Chaguaramos
La Castellana
Tel.: 261.4481/5505/6529

BULGARIA
Quinta Sofía
Calle Las Lomas
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 752.1042/9368

CANADA
Torre Europa, Piso 7
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Chacaíto
Tel.: 951.6166/6171/4114

CHILE
Torre La Noira, Piso 10
Paseo Enrique Erazo
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 95.5514, 92.1379/5364, 93.3378

COLOMBIA
(Embassy)
Torre Credival, Piso 11
2da. Avda. de Campo Alegre
Tel.: 33.1835, 261.6592

(Consulate)
Edif. Consulado de Colombia
Avda. Guaicaipuro
Entre Plaza Chacaíto y Avda. Casanova
El Rosal
Tel.: 951.5770/6692

CUBA
Quinta Lucibri
3ra. Avenida con 2da. Calle
Campo Alegre
Tel.: 261.9051/6643

CZECHOSLOVAKIA
Quinta Isabel
Calle Los Cedros
Country Club
Tel.: 261.8588/1746

(Commercial Attaché)
Centro Plaza,
Torre A, Piso 10
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 283.1679/2786

DENMARK
Edif. Easo
Piso 17, Oficina A,
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Chacaíto
Tel.: 951.4618/5606/6618

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
Edif. Humboldt
Piso 6, Oficina 26
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Plaza Altamira Sur
Tel.: 262.1455, 978.1475, 283.2168

ECUADOR
Centro Empresarial Andres Bello
Torre Oeste, Piso 13
Avda. Andrés Bello
Tel.: 781.3277/3735/3613

EGYPT
Quinta Maribel
Calle Guaicapuro
Las Mercedes (sector San Román)
Tel.: 92.6256/6259

EL SALVADOR
Edif. Los Roques, Piso 4
Avda. Principal
Chuao
Tel.: 91.7356

FINLAND
Avda. Tamanaco con Avda. Sorocaima
Edif. Atrium
El Rosal
Tel.: 952.4111/4487

FRANCE
Edif. Los Frailes
Calle La Guairita, Piso 5
Chuao
Tel.: 92.4253, 91.0333/0143

GABON
Quinta Magdala
Transversal 9
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 284.8774/9367

GERMANY
Edif. Panaven, Piso 2
Avda. San Juan Bosco y 3ra. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 261.0181/1205/2229/3253

GREAT BRITAIN
Torre Las Mercedes, Piso 3
Avda. La Estancia
Chuao
Tel.: 751.1887/1454/1166

GREECE
Quinta Her-Land
4ta. Transversal (entre 6ta.
y 7ma. Transversal)
Altamira
Tel.: 262.0756/1590

GRENADA
Calle La Guairita
Edif. Los Frailes, Piso 3
Chuao
Tel.: 91.9359/1237

GUATEMALA
Edif. Los Frailes
Calle La Guairita
Piso 6
Chuao
Tel.: 91.7552

GUYANA
Quinta Roraima
Avda. El Paseo
Prados del Este
Tel.: 77.1158, 978.2781

HAITI
Quinta Flor 59
Avda. L. Rosas
San Rafael de la Florida
Tel.: 74.7220, 77.1735

HONDURAS
Quinta Taparito
Avda. La Salle (3ra. Transversal)
Sebucán
Tel.: 284.9993, 283.7246

HUNGARY
Quinta Budapest
Calle Las Colinas
Lomas de San Rafael
La Florida
Tel.: 74.3659/3167

INDIA
Quinta Tagore
Avda. San Carlos
La Floresta
Tel.: 284.5549/8147, 285.3806

INDONESIA
Quinta La Trinidad
No.55, Block E
Avda. El Paseo con Calle Maracaibo
Prados del Este
Tel.: 978.0793, 976.2725

IRAN
Quinta Omnat
Calle Kamel Ataturk
Antes de Calle La Vuelta del Zorro
Valle Arriba
Tel.: 92.1854/3575

IRAQ
Quinta Babilonia
Calle Los Malabares
Cerca de Avda. Los Naranjos
Valle Arriba
Tel.: 91.1627/5078/5112

ISRAEL
Centro Empresarial MIranda
Piso 4, Oficina 4-d
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Los Ruices
Tel.: 239.4511/4920/4110

ITALY
Avda. Tamanaco con Sorocaima
Edif. Atrium PH
El Rosal
Tel.: 92.4111, 952.4487

JAMAICA
Centro Plaza
Torre A, Piso 11
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 283.6933/6321/6798

JAPAN
Quinta Sacuara
Avda. San Juan Bosco
Entre 8va. y 9na.Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 261.8333/7990

KOREA
Quinta Mi Corry
Calle Alameda con Calle Andalucía
Prados del Este
Tel.: 77.0942, 978.4208

KUWAIT
Edif. Cavendes
Piso 1, Oficina 101
Avda. Fransisco de Miranda
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 285.5186, 284.9614

LEBANON
Edif. Embajada de Lebanon
Prolongacion Avda. Parima
Colinas de Bello Monte
Tel.: 752.0726, 751.6165/5943

LIBYA
Quinta Los Leones
3ra. Avda.
Entre 9na. y 10ma. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 33.1873, 261.1290/3953/7271

MEXICO
(Embassy)
Calle Guaicapuro
Edif. Forum, Piso 5
El Rosal
Tel.: 952.3850/2408

(Consulate)
Edif. Parque Cristal, Torre Este
Piso 14, Oficina 9
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 284.8405

NETHERLANDS
Edif. San Juan
Pisos 9 y 10
2da. Transversal de Avda. San Juan Bosco
Altamira
Tel.: 263.3076/3622

NICARAGUA
Quinta Teocal
Calle Codazzi con Andalucia
Prados del Este
Tel.: 77.2459/4284

NIGERIA
Quinta Hucha
Calle Vaamonde
Cruce con Las Marias
Country Club
Tel.: 263.4936/4816/4635

NORWAY
Edif. Exa.
Piso 9, Oficina 905
Avda. Libertador
El Rosal
Tel.: 262.1595, 31.0044

ORDER OF MALTA
Edif. Cavendes
Piso 1, Oficina 901
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Transversal 1
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 284.7054

PANAMA
Edif. Los Frailes, Piso 6
Calle La Guairita
Chuao
Tel.: 92.9093/9182/7058

PARAGUAY
Torre Phelps
Piso 11, Oficina D
Plaza Venezuela
Los Caobos
Tel.: 781.1433/1244

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
Quinta E. Oriente
Avda. El Paseo
Prados del Este
Tel.: 978.4864/3653, 77.1415

PERU
Edif. Centro Andres Bello
Oeste Piso 7,
Oficinas 71 y 72
Avda. Andres Bello y Avda. Maripérez
Tel.: 781.7180/8446
Consulate: 781.8103

POLAND
Quinta Ambar
Avda. Nicolás Copérnico
Valle Arriba
Tel.: 91.1461

PORTUGAL
(Embassy)
Edif. Fedecamaras, Piso 1
Avda. El Empalme
El Bosque
Tel.: 731.0320/0326

(Consulate)
No. 404, Avda. San Carlos
La Floresta
Tel.: 284.1129/2913

RUSSIA
Quinta Soyuz
Calle Las Lomas
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 752.2264/5312

RUMANIA
Quinta Muchachera
Calle Pedregal
La Castellana
Tel.: 261.2769, 262.1235, 33.6475

SAUDI ARABIA
Quinta Makkah
Calle Andres Pietri 2
Los Chorros
Tel.: 239.0290/0396/7182

SPAIN
(Embassy)
Quinta Marmolejo
Avda. Mohedano
Entre 1ra. y 2da. Transversal
La Castellana
Tel.: 263.2855/3876/0932/1956/3855

(Consulate)
Edif. Banco Unión, Piso 2
Avda. Lincoln
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 72.0421, 71.2432

SURINAM
Quinta Los Milagros
Avda. 4
Entre 7ma. y 8va. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 261.2095/2724

SWEDEN
Torre Europa, Piso 8
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Campo Alegre
Tel.: 952.2111/2070

SWITZERLAND
Torre Europa, Piso 6
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Campo Alegre
Tel.: 951.4064

SYRIA
Quinta Damasco
Avda. Casiquiare y Avda. Miguelangel
Colinas de Bello Monte
Tel.: 752.687/5375

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
Quinta Serrana
Avda. 4.
Entre 7ma. y 8va. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 261.3748

TURKEY
Quinta Turquesa
Calle Kemal Ataturk
Valle Arriba
Tel.: 91.0075, 92.0442

UNITED STATES
Avda. Principal de la Floresta
La Floresta
Tel.: 285.3111/2222

URUGUAY
Torre Delta
Piso 8, Oficinas A y B
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Altamira Sur
Tel.: 261.1407

VATICAN
Nunciatura Apostolica
Avda. La Salle
Los Caobos
Tel.: 781.8939/3101

YUGOSLAVIA
Quinta No.13
En frente de Clínica Sanatrix
4ta. Avda. Campo Alegre
Tel.: 33.7995/1014

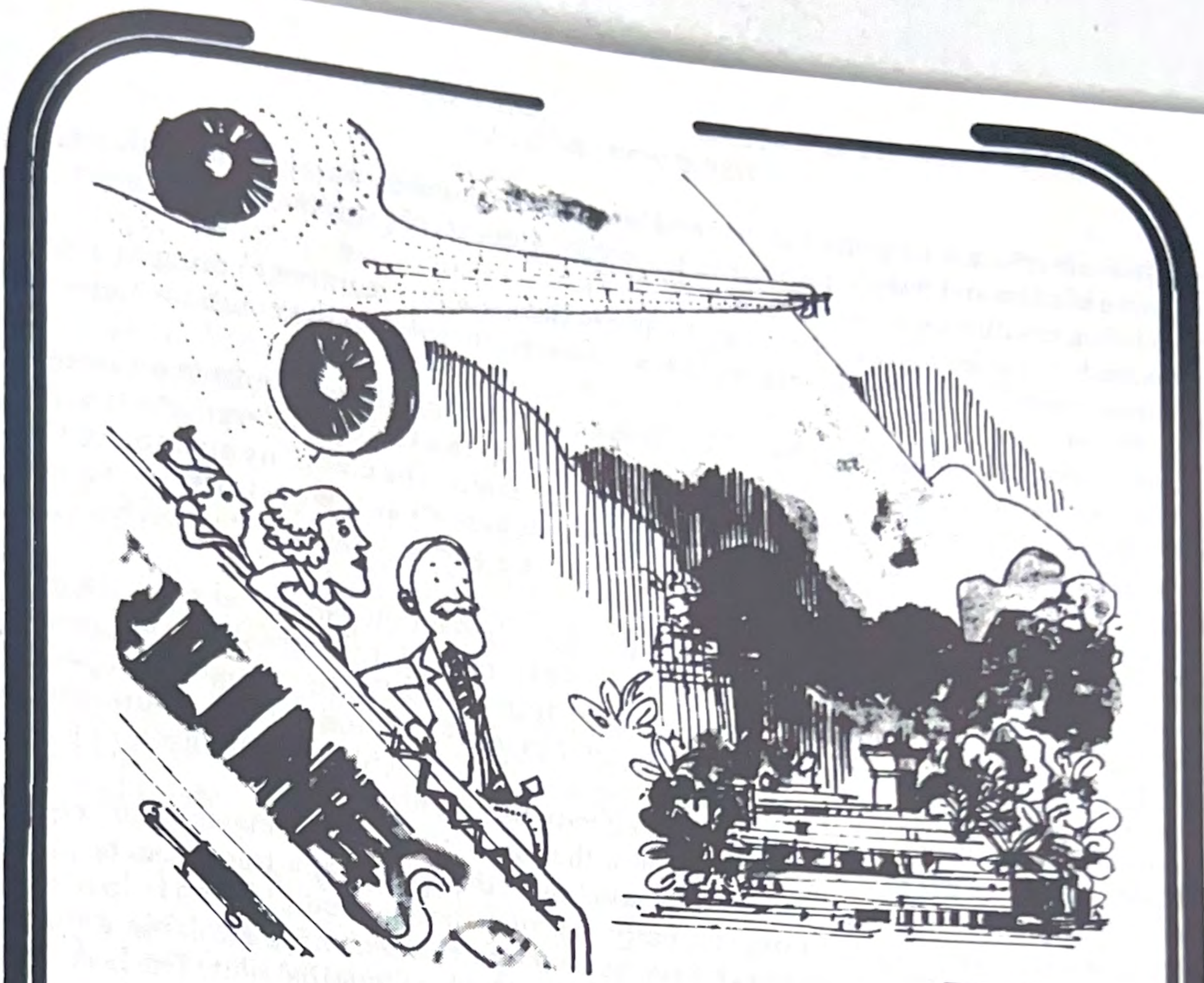
HOUSING

The real estate situation in Caracas faced by people with bolívar salaries is dramatically different from that faced by those with dollar salaries. Although the situation is not quite so grim in other cities in Venezuela, finding truly affordable housing in the volatile Caracas real estate market is an ever-increasing problem for families on bolívar-linked or low salaries.

Many property owners are now requiring that monthly rents be paid in dollars, or if paid in bolívares, calculated by the dollar exchange rate the day the check is written. The government is trying to eliminate this practice, as the bolívar is the only legal tender in Venezuela, but because demand is higher than supply and because the bolívar continues to devalue daily, it is unlikely that property owners will stop this practice. Likewise, it is not uncommon for landlords to ask for a year or more of rent paid in advance.

The overall housing situation of the middle class in Caracas is most optimistically described as very difficult. A shortage of available apartments or *quintas* (houses) means that when residences come up for rent, they are snapped up immediately. Loans for home purchase have interest rates of more than 50 percent for periods of five to eight years. The large number of young professionals living in multigenerational households is as much a reflection of the current economic reality as it is of traditional cultural values.

Those moving to Caracas to work at a job without a dollar-based income and/or a housing allowance need to carefully investigate the housing market. Single people generally have a hard time locating an apartment that is not extremely expensive for one person and often



WHERE IS RENT-A-HOUSE?

REALTOR®

Need help? You are not alone. Every year hundreds of families entrust Rent-A-House with the delicate task of locating their homes.

organización
Rent-A-House
Since 1969

CARACAS Main office: C.C.C.T. Torre D. Ofic. D-101
Phone: (582) 262.21.16 / 959.05.11 - Fax (582) 261.55.50

* **Hotel Tamanaco Intercontinental.** Phone: (582) 208.70.08- 91.95.11

MARACAIBO: Del Lago Intercontinental Hotel. Phone: (061) 91.29.79

Mail Adress: Apartado Postal 60436,Caracas 1060-A, Venezuela.

Ask us for the latest "REAL ESTATE REPORT", available without cost.

need to share with one or more roommates. However, some room rentals come without rights to use the kitchen and telephone or guest privileges. Reports of problems experienced under these living conditions are numerous.

Because of the housing crunch, local tenants have every incentive to cling to a decent apartment and often fight a lease cancellation or eviction order in the courts, which can be a lengthy process.

Those who do have a dollar-based income and a housing allowance from a financially secure multinational company or foreign government are in a truly privileged position in the housing market. They are a property owner's dream tenant: The company guarantees to pay the monthly rent in dollars or the bolívar equivalent as well as a large three-to-six-month deposit or *fianza;* the tenant is tolerant of rent increases and will move out when his one- to three-year Venezuelan contract expires.

The best way to find available housing is to regularly scan the classified advertisements in the Caracas Spanish-language newspaper, El Universal. More expensive apartments or *quintas*, many offered only with dollar rents, are featured in the English-language paper, The Daily Journal. It is important to get the papers early in the day, since the best apartments are snapped up quickly. Even then, a whole day can be spent on the phone, with nothing gained except the knowledge that the property has already been rented or sold.

Many people spend months looking before they find a place that meets their requirements. One option is to stay in a residential hotel until the perfect apartment can be found.

Because of the difficulty in finding property, it is often better to employ the help of a real estate agency, which often has inside knowledge on properties becoming available, although agents will charge a sizeable commission, some as high as two months' rent. The best tactic is to visit the agency, go through the housing requirements with them, and then call on a daily basis to check if anything new has come in. Since there are no licensing requirements for real estate agencies in Venezuela, it is doubly important to deal only with reputable agencies. Some of the largest agencies have English-speaking agents who are available to accompany prospective clients on apartment and house visits.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

LOCATION - CARACAS

It is extremely important to select a residential section of town that is near both to one's work and children's school. The traffic situation in Caracas is getting worse, not better, and commuting problems can spell disaster. For those without cars, living near one of the two Metro lines or the MetroBus network should be a priority.

In Caracas, the areas in the eastern sections of town are generally safer in terms of overall crime than those in the west and in the center. One good measure of desirability in housing is distance from "barrio" areas, which are often no more than enclaves within different residential areas.

The most popular apartment and *quinta* residential zones in Caracas today include Santa Rosa de Lima, San Román, Prados del Este, Colinas de Bello Monte, Lomas de Valle Arriba, Chulavista, Altamira, the upper part of La Castellana and Alta Florida.

Among the areas that offer a wide selection of *quintas* for rent are Valle Arriba, Chulavista, Altamira, La Castellana, La Florida, Prados del Este, La Lagunita, Lomas del Mirador, Cerro Verde, Las Mercedes and Las Mesetas de Santa Rosa de Lima - all of which are considered exclusive neighborhoods and are, therefore, expensive.

Apartments are also available in the pricey areas of El Rosal and Terrazas del Avila.

For apartments and *quintas* in more economical but very agreeable parts of town, consider El Cafetal, Chuao, San Luis, Caurimare, La Casona, Cumbres de Curumo, La Boyera, Santa Paula, Santa Sofía, Terrazas del Club Hípico, Alto Prado, Manzanares, Sebucán, La Tahona, Los Palos Grandes, Santa Eduvigis, all in the east (techinically the city's center and south), Montalbán in the west, or El Marques and La California in the northeast.

More affordable areas for apartments include Cumbres de Curumo, Los Ruices, Chacaíto, El Bosque, Santa Mónica, La Bonita, La Urbina, and the Guaicay sector of Los Samanes.

LOCATION - MARACAIBO

Maracaibo's most prestigious residential areas are concentrated in the northeast part of the city, including the *urbanizaciones* of Creole and Virginia, just to the west of the Club Nautico of Maracaibo. These exclusive neighborhoods developed to fill the housing needs of the top executives of the old Creole Oil Co.- one of the major oil companies in this city before the nationalization of Venezuela's petroleum industry.

Bella Vista, just to the west of these areas, is another focal point for quality housing, particularly for families with children in the American School, Escuela Bella Vista, which is located there.

LOCATION - VALENCIA

The principal guideline when looking for living quarters in Valencia is to consider north of Avda. Cedeño as far as the Guaparo Redoma and any of the *urbanizaciones* in the Trigal areas and Lomas del Este to the west.

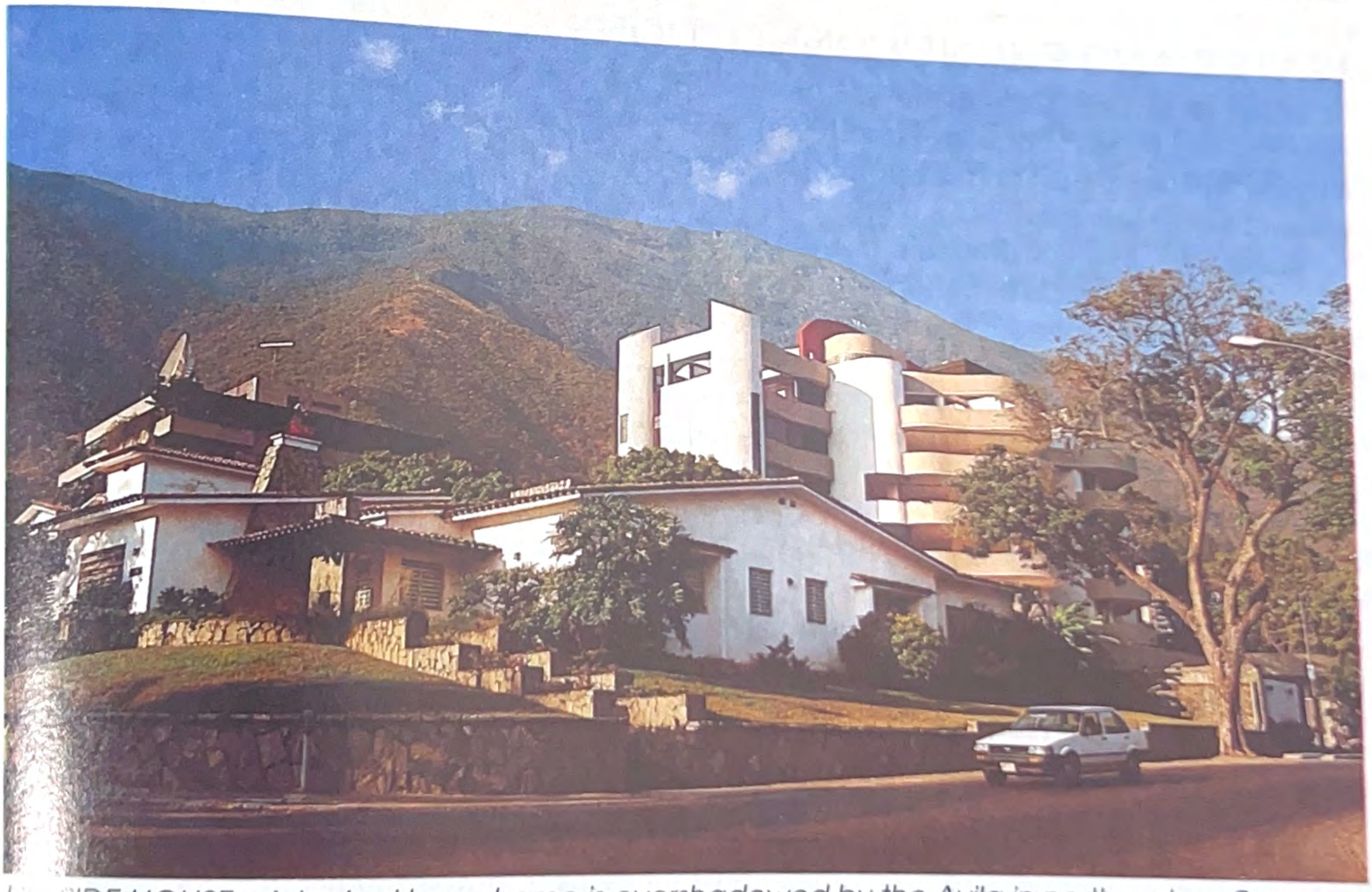


Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

HILLSIDE HOUSE - A typical large home is overshadowed by the Avila in northeastern Caracas.

Many families with children prefer to live in the Trigal area, east of the freeway, for easiest access to Colegio Internacional de Carabobo, the American school in Trigal Norte. There is a wide selection of both *quintas* and apartment towers throughout this area, including the *urbanizaciones* of Trigal Norte, Parque Trigal, Trigal, La Trigaleña, and Las Chimeneas.

Guaparo is considered quite exclusive, especially the closer one gets to Club Hípico, a prestigious private club. This is an area limited to *quintas.*

The *urbanizaciones* of El Viñedo, La Viña, La Alegría, Carabobo, Sabana Larga, Valle de Camoruco, and Prebo are considered the nicest in the west central area, with a variety of apartment buildings and *quintas.* Because of the growing encroachment of commercial buildings in former residential zones in El Viñedo and La Viña, the most desirable zones are considered those furthest to the west.

Many new, very attractive apartment buildings have been erected on the connecting road between Valle de Camoruco and Avda. Cuatricentenario. The sector around Los Nísperos and Terrazas de Los Nísperos has a number of slightly older apartment buildings which offer comfortable housing at lower rents than in the newest structures.

At the western extreme of Avda. Cuatricentenario are the two most exclusive housing areas in Valencia, each revolving around a country club. The northernmost sector, Colinas de Guataparo, is oriented toward Club Internacional, while the southern sector, Urb. Guataparo Country Club is regarded as the top of the line in Carabobo's capital. This area has large, very expensive *quintas* -many more aptly considered mansions, most with good-sized yards, and many looking over various holes of Guataparo Country Club's manicured 18-hole golf course.

Although prices for housing in Valencia are cheaper than in Caracas, the gap has been narrowing in recent years.

WATER AND PHONE CONNECTIONS

Many sections of Caracas suffer from insufficient water supplies due to the inadequate capacity and frequent repair of municipal pipe systems. For this reason, it is wise to check whether the area suffers from problems, since it is not uncommon for some areas to be without water several times a week.

There has been considerable improvement, however, with widespread installation of new and larger pipes. When shortages occur in the better residential areas, it is generally due to repair work on damaged trunk lines or pumping stations. Some apartment buildings have their own tanks, as do most *quintas.*

Small tanks with electric pumps are available for installation in individual apartments. These are not large enough to provide water for days on end, but will protect the household supply long enough to make other arrangements.

Apartments or *quintas* that do not have a telephone should be avoided, since lines are in short supply in some newer sections of Caracas and may take years to install. Even where there is a telephone, it is wise to test it to ensure it is working, as there is an increasing practise of displaying dummy phones before a contract is signed. Venezuela's phone service is plagued with problems, although the situation has improved since the 1991 privatization of the formerly state-owned telephone company (CANTV).

SECURITY

There is little doubt that the incidence of crime is on the increase in Caracas. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that newcomers consider living in an apartment building rather than

a *quinta*. Apartments are far less expensive to secure, usually do not require *rejas* (iron-barred grillwork) for floors inaccessible from the ground and generally give the occupant a greater feeling of security. Also, most apartment buildings are usually well-guarded by a *concérje* and security guard and have automatic lock systems on entrances and garages.

Quintas should only be considered if they are on guarded residential streets and are thoroughly protected by *rejas* on windows, doorways and garages. High walls, dead-bolt locks on outside doors, and brightly-lit gardens and entrances are all deterrents to burglars.

Alarm systems are an effective form of protection. For both apartment and *quinta* living, installation of burglar-defying door lock systems, which shoot bolts into surrounding walls when the key is turned, is strongly recommended. One of the simplest, most reliable and least expensive security systems available to the *quinta* dweller is a dog.

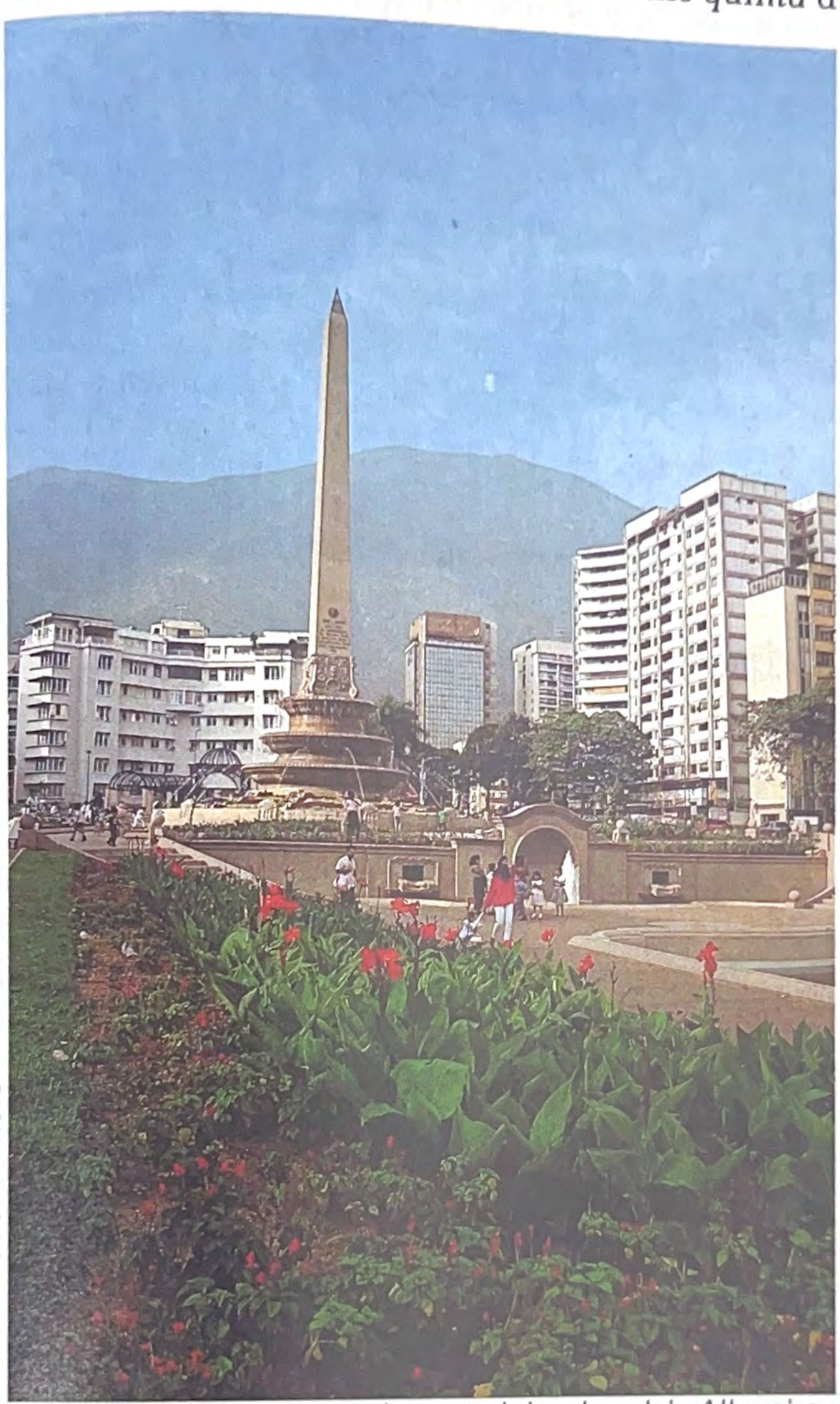


Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

PEAK PRICES - Housing rates reach top levels in Altamira, one of the prime residential areas in Caracas.

BUYING A HOUSE OR APARTMENT

The market for buying real estate skyrocketed in the 1970s, leveled off in the early 1980s and is currently undergoing another sharp increase.

Prices by square meter vary greatly, depending on whether the property in question is newly constructed or several years old and, more importantly, where it is located. Generally speaking, a house in an acceptable part of town costs at least $300,000 while the smallest studio apartment costs about $50,000 in the same part of town.

To buy a residential property in Venezuela, usually all of the purchase price must be paid in cash. Bank loans require 50 percent down in cash with the balance financed in only five years or so at 60 - 70 percent interest, making them an unattractive option. Occasionally, the home seller may extend a three-to-four-year loan for some portion of the purchase price, but he will usually charge current bank interest rates. Newly constructed apartment buildings may offer lower than market interest rates, but often the asking price has been adjusted upward to cover the difference.

RENTING

The cost of rented housing in Caracas is determined more by the location than by the size of the apartment or house. A three-bedroom, unfurnished 300-square-meter (990 feet) apartment in a fashionable section of town such as San Román could rent for as much as $4,500 (Bs.409,500) a month, while a 200-square-meter (660 feet) apartment with the same number of bedrooms in El Cafetal might be closer to $1,500. (Bs.136,500) It is very difficult to find a four-bedroom apartment over 250 square meters (825 feet) for under $5,000 (Bs.455,000) a month. In desirable neighborhoods, even studio apartments have starting prices of Bs.30,000 ($329.67) and finding one at the low end of the scale is often a matter of luck and persistence.

Furnished housing does exist, although selection is limited and the standard "colonial" or "modern" styles may not be to everyone's taste. A furnished apartment or house may rent for about $300 (Bs.27,300) to $500 (Bs.45,500) more than its unfurnished equivalent in the same area.

In the last few years, there has been a growing demand by a number of foreign companies with local affiliates for furnished housing for personnel brought in from abroad for a limited time.

The cost of renting individual rooms in Caracas can also vary greatly, although generally speaking, about Bs.15,000 ($164.85) a month is considered reasonable. This should cover all bills, although occasionally there is no access to a telephone, except for incoming calls.

Landlords and landladies in Caracas can be capricious and difficult to deal with. Many will not tolerate visitors, least of all a partner staying the night. Others will make it their business to know everything about their tenant, to the point of being overtly nosy.

MI CASA INTERNATIONAL

Do you need a home finder? We have the best.

We have highly experienced counselors who provide you with the personalized real estate service you require.
You choose from the most extensive and complete selection of apartments, homes and offices in the market, be it rent or sale.
We'll take you to inspect the property to insure it suits your tastes... and your budget.
So stop running to the wrong places, the property you're looking for is at your fingertips at Mi Casa, ***your*** casa.

Call us now!
Caracas: 91.00.22 (Master) FAX: 9937804
Valencia: 22.71.94 (Master)
Maracaibo: 91.95.34 - 91.95.94

MI CASA INTERNATIONAL
RENTAL, SALES & PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

The apartment hunter will see advertisements for *traspaspos* (sublets) with the lure of extremely low rents in older, rent-controlled buildings, which require a large initial fee usually equivalent to one year's worth of normal rent. In theory, a *traspaso* is a way to rent in a building where maximum annual rent increases are limited by law. However, most *traspasos* require the subtenant to leave the apartment in the original tenant's name, which leaves the subtenant without legal status with the property owner. In addition, the practice of asking for the high initial fee is technically illegal, and there is no guarantee that the new tenant will be able to keep the lease in future years. This type of transaction is not recommended without legal advice.

RENTAL CONTRACTS

Individuals moving into an apartment will often be asked to sign a contract with rental conditions, including the period of time, and a specified period of notice required by each side upon vacating the premises. These are normally standard documents laying down reasonable terms and conditions for both parties.

Where contracts for whole houses or apartments are involved, most real estate agencies are experienced in handling them. An attorney usually writes up the contract, but even so, it is advisable that a contract be checked by an expert before the prospective tenant signs. It is advisable to carefully consider paying one month's reserve to hold a property, since if something happens and the lease does not go through, regardless of what the agent has said, it will be hard to get the money back.

Important points to look for in a contract are clauses concerning duration of rental period; yearly inflation increase in rent; non-renewal notification; deposit money and under what circumstances it will not be returned; inventory and the current condition of the property; the condition in which the property must be left when the tenant leaves; responsibility for repairs and painting; and a 15- to 30-day clause for any repairs necessary within the first month that should be at the owner's expense.

Tenants generally pay all utilities except water. Generally, they are required to paint the inside of a *quinta* and have the carpeting cleaned before vacating the premises. Usually the owner is responsible for condominium fees.

The tenant's responsibility should not go beyond minor repairs, and it should be specified that his outlay for the same should not exceed 15 to 20 percent of the monthly rent. Inclusion of a 15- to 30-day goodwill clause in the contract is advisable. This allows the tenant some time after moving in to check the proper functioning of all installations such as plumbing, electricity, etc.

The law stipulates that rent may be paid at the end of each month, corresponding to the period already transpired. However, at present most contracts insist on advance payment, due at the beginning of each month because banks require mortgage payments at that time. Most landlords prefer to be paid directly by check or in cash rather than by automatic bank transfers which tend to be slow and unreliable.

Most contracts are for a minimum of one year and seldom exceed two years. Although it may be assumed that the contract will be renewed unless witten notice has been given 60 days in advance, the renewal can involve an increase of anywhere from 30 percent-80 percent in monthly payments. Notice of increases must be given before the contract expires.

A tenant who leaves before his contract expires may be allowed by his landlord to find a new tenant, or, if a diplomatic clause has been added to the contract, can get out of his

obligation by paying a penalty of one or two months' rent with 60 days' notice. Most agencies however flatly refuse to include the clause, which allows a tenant to vacate the premises before the end of the lease if he is transferred. Usually the tenant must have lived on the premises for at least six months.

If the landlord decides not to renew the contract, tenants must be advised two or three months before the contract's expiration date. The notification must be in writing and signed by the tenant as acknowledgment of its receipt. If the landlord accepts a month's rent after a contract's expiration date, the contract is automatically renewed for another year.

Any tenant who wishes to protest against a non-renewal notification may appeal to Dirección de Inquilinato, Ministerio de Fomento, Centro Simón Bolívar, Torre Sur, Piso 4, Oficina 414, El Silencio (Tel.: 42.1425, 41.9341). It is open from 8:00 a.m. - noon, 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday).

During the appeal period, a process that could take two to three years, the tenant may continue to occupy the disputed premises. If the landlord refuses to accept payment, the monthly rent may be deposited at the Juzgado del Municipio (Municipal Court) in the jurisdiction where the premises are located. A tenant may be forced to leave only under certain circumstances, such as if the rent has not been paid; if the owner or members of the landlord's immediate family wish to live in the house or apartment; if the house or apartment is to be repaired, demolished or renovated, is being used for illegal purposes, or has been seriously damaged by the tenant; or if there are serious complaints by neighbors about disturbances caused by the tenant or his family.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

DOWN ON THE FARM - Los Aleros, a reconstructed village near Mérida, which shows typical regional housing.

OFFICE SPACE

Prices for purchase or rental of office space vary according to location, quality of construction, availability of parking, and age of the building. Major factors in pricing are access to public transportation, such as the Metro system, and main thoroughfares such as the Avda. Libertador.

Examples of rental price per square meter run from Bs.800 ($8.79) in Chacaíto to Bs.1,500 ($16.48) in newer buildings near the Metro in Altamira, or in the CCCT. Some of the newest buildings in prime locations are pushing Bs.2,000 ($21.97) per square meter.

Offices for sale near the Metro line go for Bs.100,000 ($1,098.90) to Bs.130,000 ($1,444.44) per square meter. Three-month deposits are considered normal, although some landlords may ask for up to a year and, in extreme cases, for a two-year deposit. Most landlords prefer a guarantee for the tenant's obligation from a commercial firm of satisfactory financial standing (*fianza comercial*). The tenant's company is sometimes willing to stand as guarantor.

In addition to this type of guarantee against damages and non-payment of rent, tenants vacating their premises may be requested by the landlord to supply certification called a *solvencia*, which confirms that all bills are paid, from the telephone, water, gas, garbage collection and electricity companies. Most landlords do not finalize termination until the last month's bill from each utility has been received, even with *solvencias*, so there can be a delay of several mounths before the deposit is returned.

It is important that an inventory concerning the state and contents of the property be drawn up, either by the real estate agency or by the owner and prospective tenant jointly, and signed by both. The tenant is to be reimbursed part or all of his deposit at the end of his tenancy, depending on the condition of the premises.

Tenants' deposits may be made into a bank account, with the tenant earning interest on his deposit, and the bank taking three percent of the total deposit as commission at the time of deposit, which is called a *fianza bancaria*; by direct payment to the landlord, for which the tenant receives a receipt but no interest on the deposit; and by a deposit paid by an insurance company that agrees to act as a guarantor on a yearly, renewable basis for a commission, a method that is difficult to arrange.

UTILITIES

Venezuela's public services were not designed to handle the great explosion in housing, population and communication of recent years. Lack of planning and overcrowding are evident everywhere. The utilities are struggling to keep up with the rapid pace of expansion, but shortages, breakdowns and inadequate service are part of everyday life, and are accepted as such.

As part of the current administration's measures, aimed at confronting the country's economic crisis, the prices of public utilities and services have risen considerably. Telephone rates practically doubled in late 1989, and international rates increased at least 50 percent in the last two years although the basic monthly charge for the telephone service is a bargain by most international standards, at Bs.500 ($5.49).

TELEPHONES

The CANTV (Compañía Anónima Nacional Teléfonos de Venezuela) is trying to stay abreast with the tremendous increase in Caracas subscribers. Despite the most sophisticated

equipment and an extensive direct-dialing, long-distance network, telephones in Caracas are plagued with wrong numbers, crossed lines, erroneous busy signals, "dead" phones, and the sound of wildly ringing bells - all caused by overloaded exchanges. The number of hours lost on this account is inestimable. CANTV was privatized in 1991 and the new ownership is slowly trying to correct the situation.

However, currently there are not enough telephone lines to serve Caracas and a long wait is inevitable for people who apply for installations. It is not uncommon in apartment buildings for someone to steal another's line. Application for a telephone line may be made at any CANTV commercial office but there may be a wait of several years. For this reason, phone lines are sold through advertisments for many thousands of bolívars.

Telephone bills are sent through the somewhat inefficient postal system, Ipostel, or are distributed by collectors who generally just drop off the bill without waiting for payment. Either way, the bills may often arrive after the date on which payment is due. Payment can be made in cash or by check at the CANTV office, or by a personal check or cash deposited into the phone company's account. Some banks also will accept transfers over the telephone.

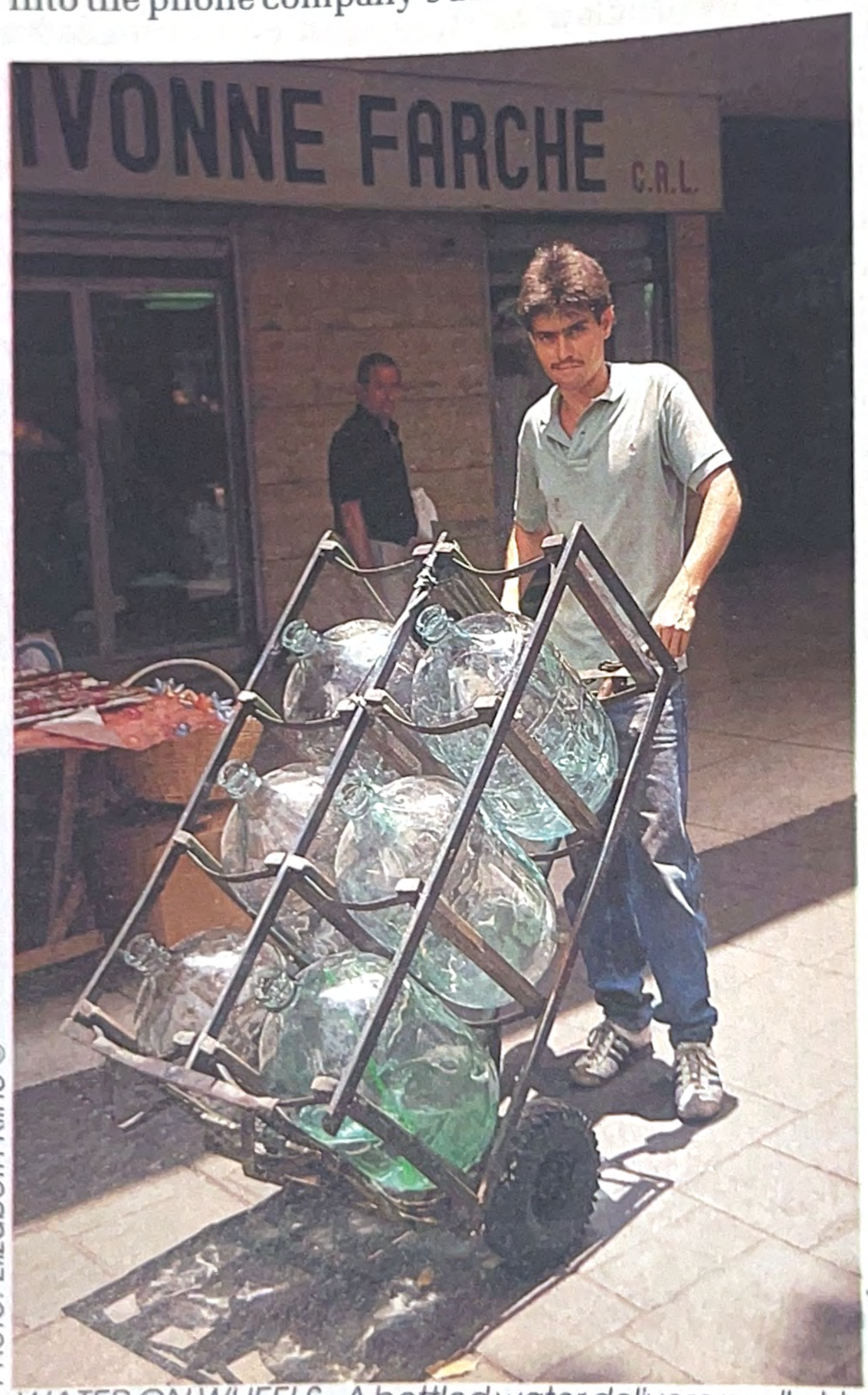


Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

WATER ON WHEELS - A bottled water deliverer walks his way through the streets.

The telephone book provides the names and addresses of all banks and businesses where CANTV bills may be paid, as well as the official CANTV commercial office for each district. Most large shopping centers have a CANTV office. Many banks will also accept phone bill payments, but the bill should be paid directly and not through automatic bank payment services, which have a reputation for being slow and error-prone. Overdue bills can only be settled at CANTV offices.

Telephone service will be disconnected by CANTV for non-payment. Even if a subscriber has not received his invoice, it is not considered a valid excuse. When payments are up to date, other problems sometimes lead to cutoffs. To straighten out such complications, all telephone bills and receipts of payment should be kept. If a bill is not received before the day payment is due, CANTV should be consulted.

Phone bills are now calculated on a use basis with charges tallied by the number of "impulses" used per phone call.

For repairs and information, dial 15.

(For more information, see "Telephone Services," page 265.)

GAS

Gas is used in the majority of Caracas homes for cooking although electric stoves are common in newer areas. Gas piped directly from the street is more economical than either electricity or bottled gas.

Nearly all of eastern Caracas is served by a network of natural gas lines maintained by the state-owned firm, Corpoven. Cevegas is the company in charge of marketing the gas, and it handles both installation of connections and collections. Billing occurs every two months and invoices are payable at commercial and Cevegas offices listed on the bill's reverse side. Overdue bills can be paid at Cevegas offices only. A small reconnect fee is charged.

Areas without piped natural gas rely on LP (liquid propane) bottled gas. Home delivery is handled by many supply companies that serve the different metropolitan zones of Caracas. Currently, some of these companies are not taking on new clients because of a shortage of the tanks in which the LP is sold. **(For bottled gas supplies, see "Yellow Pages," page 456.)**

Users of bottled gas generally keep two tanks on hand, one for current use and one for reserve. A tank costs about $7 (Bs.637) and can last a surprisingly long period in families with normal cooking needs.

ELECTRICITY

The electric system is based on a 120-volt, 60-cycle system, with a single-phase AC current. Electric clothes dryers and kitchen ranges may require 220 volts.

C.A. La Electricidad de Caracas and Luz Eléctrica de Venezuela are constantly working to improve service in the metropolitan area. Blackouts are rare in most of Caracas, but some neighborhoods have more trouble than others.

Electricity bills arrive every two months with the bill for garbage collection. Like telephone bills, they are sent through the mail or delivered by a collector. If service is cut off for lack of payment, it is usually quickly reconnected when bills are paid, along with a reconnection charge. Once the due date of the electricity bill has passed, payment must be made directly to the supplying power company.

For information concerning services interruptions and repairs in Caracas, call 262.2222.

WATER

The waterworks institute, Instituto Nacional de Obras Sanitarias (INOS) distributes invoices every two months. In older apartment buildings, this service is charged to the condominium. Most newer buildings have individual water meters installed for each apartment, as do *quintas*. On the reverse side of the invoice is a list of the 10 official INOS commercial offices where the bills may be paid. Personal checks are accepted.

Some metropolitan areas seem to suffer more than others from temporary water cut-offs, but no street or neighborhood is immune. In the dry season, some neighborhoods have only limited supplies of water for extended periods of time. Often in apartment buildings, water will be rationed by turning it on only for short periods early in the morning, at noon and in the evenings, which are sometimes announced by posted notices on the building bulletin board. Planned water cut-offs to work on the water delivery system are announced in advance in the newspaper and are usually scheduled over long holidays when many people are out of town.

To deal with cutoffs, it is worth maintaining a large, covered, plastic storage tub of water in the bathroom. In Caracas, emergency water delivery may be obtained from Hidrocapital at these numbers: Tel.: 481.4892 (western Caracas); 292.2223 (eastern Caracas); 451.5334 (Baruta).

DRINKING WATER

Authorities contend that Caracas water is pure and can be drunk straight from the tap. Although the water supply usually is heavily chlorinated and many people have drunk it for years without ill effects, it is not recommended. The tanks and pipes through which the water passes in individual homes and buildings are generally dirty, especially in older neighborhoods or where streets have been dug up for repairs.

Many apartments and *quintas* have installed water filters, which can be purchased at big department stores or in most hardware stores. Filters, which filter out dirt, not germs, need to be cleaned about every two weeks. As an added precaution, water from the tap can also be boiled for 20 minutes, then aerated by pouring it two or three times from one receptacle to another. It is then quite safe to drink. Water can also be treated with chlorine tablets.

In 1982, the Caracas Metropolitan Aqueduct began fluoridating the water supply of Venezuela's capital, following a program designed in conjunction with the Odontologist Association (Colegio de Odontólogos).

Bottled Water

A solution to the water purification problem is to use bottled water for drinking and ice-making. Home delivery is available on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. **(For delivery companies, see "Yellow Pages," page 456.)** Bottles contain 18 or 20 liters, depending on the supplier, and require an initial deposit of Bs.100 ($1.09). Empty bottles are exchanged at Bs.80 ($.88) each. Most bottles are mounted on a special stand in the kitchen, which costs about Bs.800 ($8.79).

Bottled water is not fluoridated. Parents of young children and pregnant and nursing women should discuss the need for fluoride supplementation with their dentists and physicians.

DOMESTIC HELP

All sorts of domestic help in the form of cleaning women, cooks, dressmakers/seamstresses, drivers/chauffeurs, gardeners, housekeepers, laundresses and maids are available in Venezuela. The most common are the live-in maid and the cleaning woman who work by the day.

Domestics include women from small towns in the "interior" of Venezuela and others from Colombia, Ecuador, Bolívia and Perú, who have come to Venezuela in search of work. There are also English-speaking maids from Trinidad and Grenada.

Maids are valuable from the standpoint of security. An unoccupied home, especially a house, is an open invitation to thieves. People who travel frequently will feel better leaving their home in the hands of a reliable maid. Spanish-speaking maids can also help newcomers learn the language and can deal with tradesmen and telephone calls until the employer has improved language skills.

VENGAS

Llame a Vengas e instale en su cocina la llama de la eficiencia

Vengas le ofrece el mejor servicio de instalación, distribución y mantenimiento, además de un Personal Técnico altamente especializado en lo que a instalación de Gas Licuado de Petróleo se refiere.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

SITTING PRETTY - A typical house in Guiria, Sucre state, shows Trinidadian influence.

HIRING HELP

Known as *muchachas* or *señoras de servicio,* maids can be found through newspaper classified sections under "Servicio de Adentro," through employment agencies, or by asking friends and neighbors for references. It can be very difficult to find and keep a good maid. Generally speaking, there are more people looking for a good maid than there are good maids.

Information on a prospective maid's personal life and her residential status is important. The life of a domestic in Latin America is not easy. Many women looking for work have complicated family problems and a great number are the sole support for their children or their families in neighboring countries. Troubles at home can be the cause of disruption in service. It is important to have a frank interview beforehand so that both parties have a clear idea of what to expect. References should be read carefully and previous employers interviewed to determine details of the maid's previous jobs, such as how much she was paid, how reliable and trustworthy she was and why she is not still working for her previous employer.

Anyone employed should have a current *cédula* (identification card) and up-to-date visa papers. An employer can be held responsible by the authorities for hiring an illegal alien. Foreigners employed in Venezuela hold *transeunte* visas that must be renewed annually. To renew a *transeunte* visa, the maid will need a letter verifying employment, written on letterhead stationery, or *papel sellado,* which lists dates of employment and includes the employer's signature and *cédula* number.

Once the duties to be performed have been agreed on, it is recommended that the maid be given a month's trial period. A good maid has pride in her abilities and will be anxious to show how well she works. At the end of the trial period, anything that needs changing may be discussed, or the maid may be dismissed if she is not satisfactory. She is legally entitled to be paid only for the days she was employed if the relationship is severed at this point.

Most newcomers will find domestic help a blessing. Maids can relieve the family of the drudgery of keeping a home clean, tidy, and free of dust in the tropical and highly polluted city of Caracas. Some maids are excellent cooks as well. Live-in maids are also expected to prepare and serve breakfast and dinner and to clean up after meals. Extra services, such as serving at a dinner party, depend on whatever mutual agreements have been reached in advance.

Many maids are excellent with children and are prepared to act as babysitters, an indispensable service in Caracas where babysitting agencies are virtually unknown.

If taking phone messages for a busy family or home-run business will be part of the maid's responsibility, she should be able to read and write well enough to do so. If she is to handle minor shopping tasks, simple arithmetic may be important. It is often easiest to write out a schedule or list of duties to act as a guideline for domestics. They should also understand how to run the vacuum cleaner, floor polisher, washing machine, dryer and other home appliances.

WORK CONDITIONS

A live-in maid should have her own furnished room and bathroom and should be supplied with soap, bath towels and bed linen. A daily cleaning woman will want to change into work clothes when she arrives in the morning and should want to shower before she leaves at the end of the day, since many live in neighborhoods where there is no running water.

Meals are generally eaten at work. A live-in maid has all her meals in the home except on her day off. She normally eats the same meals as the family, unless she prefers to buy her own. A day maid is entitled to breakfast and lunch, which she prepares herself. Most domestic workers are used to eating the large meal of the day at noon.

Uniforms are optional. Some maids see them as a status symbol and enjoy wearing them, particularly when doing messy jobs that would spoil their own clothes. Others may find them a nuisance, or insulting, so it is best to consult with individual maids. Uniforms are purchased at the employer's expense. There are agencies that specialize in uniforms, which have home delivery service. A maid will need at least two daytime work uniforms. Pastel shades are most popular, though white and black or white and blue uniforms are usually used for serving at formal dinner parties. A children's nurse is dressed all in white.

The employer is not obliged to pay for a domestic worker's medical or dental care. However, it is wise to ensure that the worker has regular physical and dental checkups. Many domestic workers have had only limited access to medical and dental care, and the resulting conditions, ranging from severe toothache to unplanned pregnancies, are a primary cause of lost working days.

Employment may be terminated in cases of contagious diseases, contracted by either the domestic worker or any other person living in the house. The employer is responsible for transporting a domestic worker who contracts an illness to an appropriate medical facility.

When work is terminated because of accident or illness not related to the job, the employer is not required to pay termination wages.

Wages vary according to the type of work done and the neighborhood the maid is working in. Pay for a live-in maid in Caracas starts at around Bs.8,000 ($87.91) per month, with food. A married couple commands a salary of Bs.15,000 ($164.84) and up. It is customary to pay wages twice monthly on the 1st and 15th of the month.

The wage for a daily maid can be anywhere from Bs.500 ($5.49) to Bs.1,000 ($10.98) per day, depending upon the size of the quarters she is cleaning. She may be paid after each day's work, once a week, or twice a month. It is advisable to keep a record of payment and days worked and to have the maid sign it every payday. This will prevent any dispute over salary payments, particularly if the relationship ends with the maid being fired.

If a daily maid is working in an area which is not served by public trans-

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

SOLE CITY- On the heels of the shoe boom are the zapateros, or shoe repairers, on the city streets.

portation, she may wish to be reimbursed for taxi charges to and from the nearest public transport stop. This should be determined before the maid is hired.

Live-in maids are entitled to an *aguinaldo* or Christmas bonus to be paid in the first half of December. The amount corresponds to the time employed: for three months, give five days' salary; for six months, give 10 days' salary; for nine months, give 15 days' salary.

It is also customary to pay a daily maid an annual bonus. For maids who work one day a week: for three months, give one day's salary; for six months, give two days' salary; for nine months, give three days' salary.

The law stipulates that domestic workers are entitled to 10 hours uninterrupted rest out of every 24 hours, excluding meal times. Domestic workers have the right to rest for a half-hour period after every five consecutive hours of work, and may not be required to work more than 12 hours in a day. They are entitled to one day off per week, normally Sundays, although many families give their maids the whole weekend off.

The normal workday for a daily maid is seven hours, including meal times. As with all domestic workers, she is entitled to a half-hour rest after five consecutive hours of work.

A domestic worker is entitled to an annual holiday of 15 days at full salary to be paid at the start of the holiday, after serving a family for one year without interruption. Most maids want to take their annual holiday during the Christmas period.

Domestic workers are not legally entitled to days off with pay on Venezuelan holidays. However, it is common to give the more important holidays, such as Christmas, New Year's and Easter, off with pay. Since there are a number of other Venezuelan holidays, the maid should understand whether she will be given these days off at the time she is hired.

DISMISSAL

Employment may be terminated, either by the employer or the domestic worker, with 15 days' notice. In lieu of notice, an employer may pay a compensation of 15 days' salary. A signed receipt for payment should be obtained.

A domestic worker who leaves without giving the stipulated notice forfeits 15 days' salary.

Employers may dismiss domestic workers without notice and without compensation for absenteeism, lack of respect, immorality, dishonesty, mistreatment of persons under the charge of the worker or failure to perform duties. Under these circumstances, the worker is only entitled to payment for days served. A domestic worker may terminate employment without notice and demand compensation of one month's salary in cases of immorality or criminal mistreatment.

OTHER SERVICES

Caracas abounds in services which have become scarce in other parts of the world. Many are offered by people who ply their trade on the streets of the residential sections of town.

Catering Services

Large-scale entertaining is a custom in Venezuela. These services, known as *agencias de festejos*, are very handy, since they offer extensive food menus for every occasion, as well as awnings, tables, chairs, dishes, cutlery, decorations, floral arrangements, waiters, cooks, bartenders, etc.

Knife Sharpening

The knife sharpener, who travels by bicycle or motorbike on which the grinding stone is mounted, uses a high-toned musical pitch-pipe to draw the public's attention.

Dressmaking

Seamstresses who specialize in everyday or office wear, and dressmakers whose specialty is formal wear can be found in Caracas. They can be located through the better fabric stores, in newspaper classified advertisements or through word of mouth. Charges may be per piece or for the day, but dressmakers who work from a client's home normally should be given lunch.

Sale of Chicken, Fruit, Eggs and Fish

Every neighborhood has a number of trucks that appear at certain hours several days a week to sell all sorts of fresh produce and meats. The *frutero* is the fruit and vegetable specialist, while the *pescadero* provides fresh seafood. In many neighborhoods all of the trucks meet at the same corner at one time, creating a miniature street market.

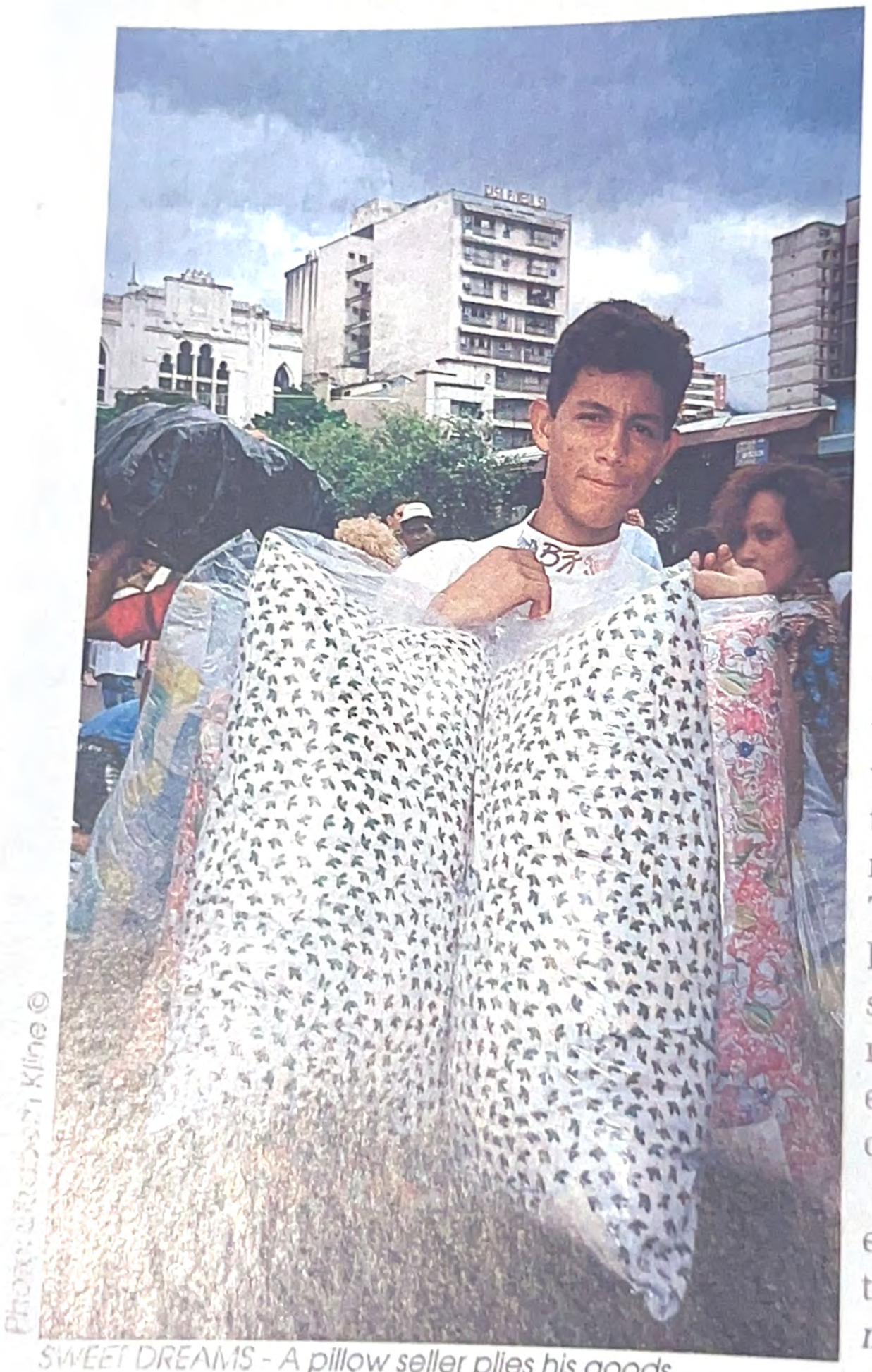


Photo: Gregory Kline © 1994

SWEET DREAMS - A pillow seller plies his goods.

Fumigation

Caracas, like all large cities, has its share of cockroaches, rodents and assorted bugs that can be controlled in the home through fumigation every six months. Cockroaches include the small *chiripas*, and the large, zeppelin-like *cucarachas*, kin to Florida's palmetto bugs. Newcomers quickly learn that spraying a couple of times a month with products available in pharmacies and supermarkets helps keep the insect population under control.

During the rainy season, *quintas* with gardens may be plagued by mosquitoes, which can be partially controlled through fumigation and more directly with smoke coils or the very effective electric tablet-using repellent machines. The rainy season may also bring out scorpions. Those who live in areas such as San Román or Prados del Este should be sure to shake out clothing and shoes before donning them, since a scorpion sting can be extremely painful and sometimes dangerous.

Few houses or apartments are equipped with window screens, but plastic or metal window screening, called *tela metálica*, can be purchased in most hardware stores.

Garbage Collection

The Instituto Metropolitano de Aseo Urbano (IMAU) is the municipal garbage collection and disposal service. Garbage collection and street sweeping is done by four private companies, each of which has the contract for a different section of Caracas and La Guaira.

Fines for illegal dumping are virtually unknown and the habit of littering is deeply ingrained in Venezuelan culture.

In more densely populated areas, collection is on a daily and sometimes even twice-daily basis; less heavily populated zones have garbage pick-up every other day. Collection companies work round the clock, Monday through Saturday; only emergency pick-ups are allowed on Sundays.

In apartment buildings, the janitor takes care of garbage disposal. Bags of garbage should not be left out too long before IMAU's pick-up times, so as to control the rat population and to avoid the tearing of bags by scavenging dogs.

Sorting household garbage for recycling is a concept that hasn't really arrived in Venezuela, although there are many people who make their living on the street collecting cardboard, aluminum cans and other metal. Most *concerjes* collect newspaper and other paper in their building for resale. In Caracas, there are large, white collectors for glass in the parking lots of Maxy's, of Torre Consolidado, and of Hospital de San Juan de Dios in Valle Arriba.

Information on recycling is also available from Fundagrea at 49.6356, and from Bioma at 571.2886.

Invoices from IMAU arrive along with the electricity bill every two months. Both bills are payable at electric company offices. The reverse side of the invoice gives a partial list of commercial locations and electricity company offices where bills may be paid. The electricity and garbage bill can be paid with Visa or MasterCard or personal check as well as cash. Costs are about $15 (Bs.1,365) for two months.

In Caracas, serious accumulation problems can be dealt with at: 681.2036/3422 in the Federal District, and 36.0059/1304 in Sucre District.

Three conveniently located offices in eastern Caracas are:

C.A. La Electricidad de Caracas
Calle Paris y Nueva York
Las Mercedes

C.A. La Electricidad de Caracas
Centro Comercial Plaza Las Américas
El Cafetal

C.A. La Electricidad de Caracas
Centro Comercial Concresa
Oficina 321
Prados del Este

¿Por Qué El Provincial?

- ¿Por qué tú sólo trabajas con el Provincial?

- Es cuestión de sentido común. En primer lugar, prefiero trabajar con El Primer Banco del País. Me siento más seguro. En segundo lugar, me dan un servicio excelente . Y por último, hay algo que la gente no piensa: que tratándose de bancos, el mejor no cuesta más.

- No lo había pensado

-Te lo dije

Primero En Tecnología
La más avanzada y sofisticada estructura de sistemas electrónicos de Venezuela, al servicio de nuestros Clientes.

Primero En Servicios
Ninguna red nacional de intercomunicación Cliente - Banco tiene la eficiencia de nuestro Sistema Pida: Telecajeros - Teleconsulta Teletransferencia - Telepago - Teleinversión

Primero En Recursos Humanos
6.900 Profesionales, los mejores, al servicio de nuestros Clientes.

Por eso, los Clientes del Provincial se sienten seguros, apoyados y bien atendidos.

¡Compruébelo!

BANCO PROVINCIAL S.A.I.C.A.
Su punto de apoyo

40 AÑOS
SIENDO SU PUNTO DE APOYO

VAPRO

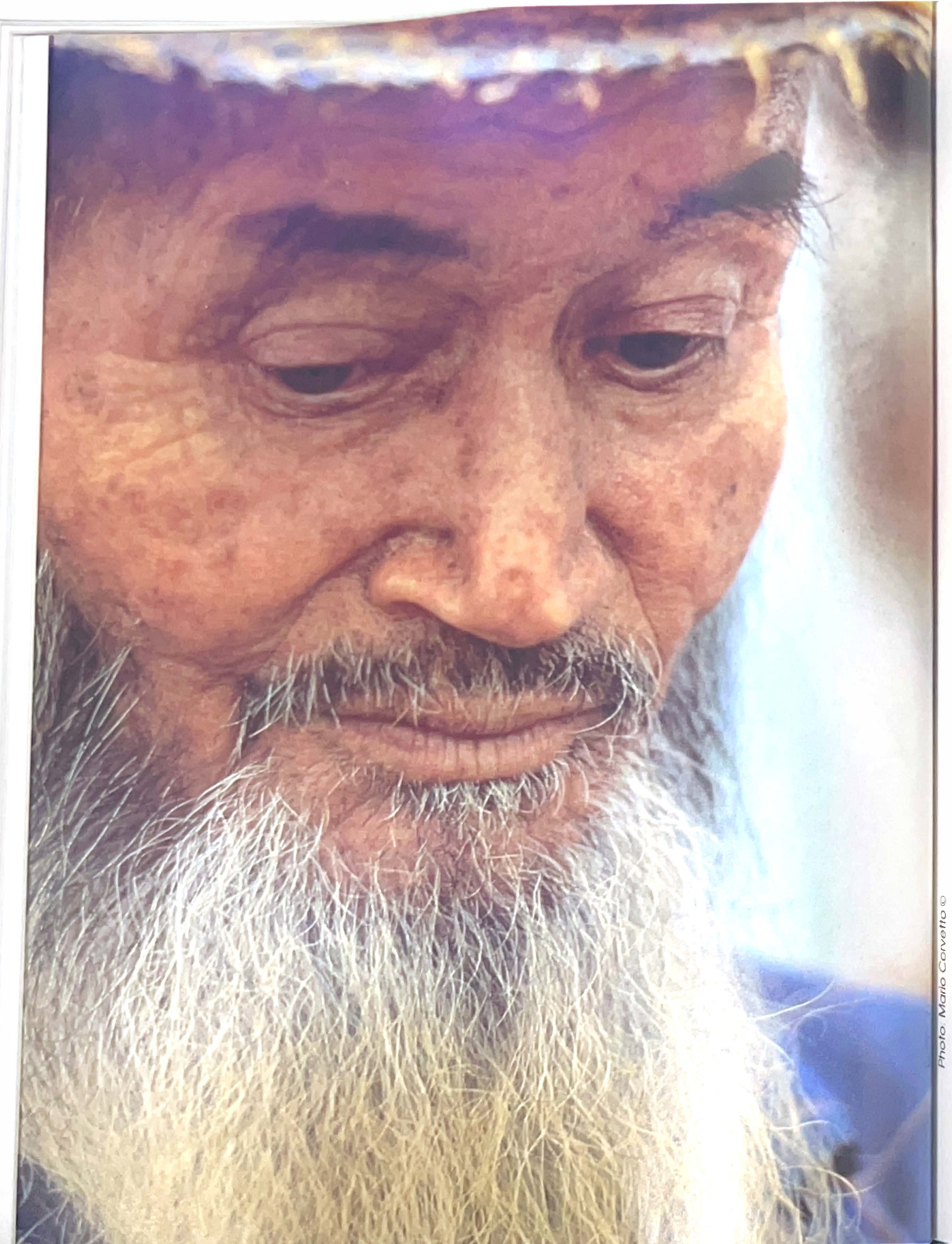


Photo Mario Cavello ©

CHAPTER VI

COMMUNITY MATTERS

EDUCATION

SCHOOLS

Over the last few years, the public school system in Venezuela has been left in disarray due to budgetary and administrative problems. The schools are plagued by strikes by both students and staff, and suffer a severe lack of teaching materials and equipment, which can extend even to an absence of desks for the students. Unfortunately, the very best of the public schools, which have produced truly outstanding graduates, are also targets for political activism, often of the more radical nature. Some students have been killed in student-police confrontations in recent years.

As a result, private education in Venezuela is regarded as a must for even the most die-hard public education loyalists.

Some parents, particularly North Americans, have chosen to teach their children at home, although parents should be aware that the legal status of home schooling remains unclear in Venezuela. It may also not be an option for children who will eventually enter the Venezuelan educational system, since there may not be a clear authority to legalize and validate diplomas or certificates, and the child's Spanish-language acquisition may have been delayed.

Venezuelan schools follow a national curriculum that is set by the Ministry of Education. This includes a year called *preparatorio*, which is roughly equivalent to first grade in the United States, followed by six years of elementary school, or *primaria*. In most instances, Venezuelan first grade corresponds to second grade in the United States. Many elementary schools also incorporate grades 7-9, or *básico*, into their programs. Some also have programs of preferential admission, where their graduates move on to specified secondary schools after the sixth grade.

There are five years of secondary school, the first three of which are general studies, or *básico*, with the last two specialized, or *diversificado*. A student finishes secondary school with a degree of *bachiller en ciencias*, (a bachelor's in science), *humanidades*, (humanities), or in a technical subject. There are no elective courses in the curriculum, although individual schools may add extra subjects and after-school programs.

Another way of completing secondary education for anyone more than 15 years old is

FACE OF AGES - A wizened Venezuelan from the Andes region looks back on life.

with a *bachillerato libre*. The students decide which subjects to study each term and then take the corresponding exams. Classes are offered year round during the day, night and on weekends. There also are evening and Saturday classes for adults who have not been able to finish primary school.

All schools in Venezuela that are registered with the Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educacion) including some of the foreign schools, teach Venezuelan history, geography, civics and Spanish. Some foreign schools, however, are not registered with the Ministry and their diplomas are not recognized by the Venezuelan government.

Schools that are registered with the Ministry of Education may need a student's school certificates and records to be notarized and legalized by the Venezuelan consulate at the point of origin. To facilitate student registration, which usually begins in spring, it is wise to have both previous school records and a doctor's health certificate.

Generally speaking, Academia Cristiana Internacional de Caracas, The British School, Colegio Internacional de Caracas, Escuela Campo Alegre, and the foreign sections of Colegio Francia (French), Colegio Humbolt (German), and Unidad Educativa Agustín Codazzi (Italian) will try to accommodate new foreign arrivals at all academic levels and throughout the year.

However, many of the Venezuelan schools have long waiting lists of five years or more and only admit new students in the fall. Parents often pre-register newborn children in more than one school, since it can be very hard to gain registration space when the child reaches school age.

Space in starting classes are awarded first to siblings of current students, then to cousins, and then to children of alumni. Pre-registration does not guarantee a space, but it may be nearly impossible to get a space without it. A long waiting list can be as much a sign of current popularity as of quality; some less fashionable schools may have space and still deliver a high-quality education.

Tuition, fees, and bus service charges vary but can range from about $9,000 (Bs.819,000) per year for one of the American schools to $1,000 (Bs.91,000) or less for a Venezuelan school. There is generally an annual registration fee and monthly tuition payments, although some schools ask for the tuition to be paid each semester or trimester. There may also be other charges, such as shares of school stock, and fees for the building construction fund and the school debt service. Parents with children in Venezuelan schools will also have to pay for textbooks.

Uniforms are standard: Dark blue trousers for boys and dark blue skirts or slacks for girls. Blue jeans may be worn by both sexes. Shirt colors vary according to the educational level; children in pre-kinder, kindergarten, and *preparatorio* wear yellow, red or white; elementary school children in *primaria* wear white; children in grades 8-10 or *básico* wear light blue; and those in grades 11-12 or *diversificado* wear beige. Regulation shoes are black or brown leather, but sneakers or other sport shoes are accepted.

The following compendium is designed to help give parents essential information about the private schools in and outside of Caracas that many children of the English-speaking community attend. Also included are French, German and Italian schools, as well as several Venezuelan private schools.

The annual price ranges for schools throughout Venezuela are as follows:

PRICE KEY

A - $3,500 (Bs.318,500) or more	C - $2,500-$1,500 (Bs.227,500 - 136,500)
B- $3,500-$2,500 (Bs.318,500 - 227,500)	D - $1,500 (Bs.136,500) or less

PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN CARACAS

ACADEMIA CRISTIANA INTERNACIONAL DE CARACAS

Colegio La Concordia
Avda. Tocuyo
Colinas de Bello Monte
Tel.: 752.3482 (Spanish only)
751.1468 (English, Rev. Mike Wakeland)
Director: Allen Murphy
Founding Date: 1990
Accreditation: In process of registration with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education.
Students: About 70 boys and girls aged 5 to 15 from kindergarten to grade 8, with average class size of 8 per grade. Students are mainly from the United States and Canada.
Staff: Seven U.S. and Canadian teachers.
Program: U.S. curriculum based in English but Spanish is taught at all grades.
Facilities/Activities: Library, two choirs.
Hours: Kindergarten, 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Monday and Wednesday)
8:30 a.m. - noon (Friday)
Grades 1-8, 8:30 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)
8:30 a.m. - noon (Friday)
Students bring their own snacks and lunches.
Transportation: Individual families or carpools.
Registration Date: May. There is a waiting list, and priority is given to children of missionary families. Attempts are made to place children of English-speaking families arriving during the year. Children must be proficient in English, or at least one of the parents must be non-Venezuelan.
School Year: Last week of August to first or second week of June.
Fees: Mission families C; non-mission families B.
Other Facts: To enroll their children, parents must affirm the school's Doctrinal Statement.

THE BRITISH SCHOOL

Transversal 9 Este y Avda. Luis Roche
Altamira
Tel.: 262.1106/1764
Fax: 262.1764
Headmaster: Roger Anniss
Founding Date: 1950
Accreditation: Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education.
Students: There are 165 boys and girls of different nationalities aged from 3 to 12 in grades from reception, infant, junior and first-year seniors. Classes average 17 students.

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE FINEST EDUCATION

THE BRITISH SCHOOL
CARACAS

Curriculum: High-quality British education for ages 3 to 12
Staff: U.K. fully qualified teachers

Class size: Small class average of 17 pupils per teacher, ensuring individual attention.

Facilities: Computers for all classes, audio-visual resources, integrated nursery school, well-stocked library, arts and crafts facilities, amphitheater, sports grounds and science lab.

Parental satisfaction: Very high, according to a 1988 Datos Attitude Survey.

Extra-curricular activities: Soccer, hockey, scouting and gymnastics.

School environment: Easily accessible, safe and pleasant location with friendly international atmosphere.

Tuition fees: Very competitive

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT US

THE BRITISH SCHOOL

Transversal 9, Altamira
Between Ave. Luis Roche and Ave. 8
Tel.: 262.1106 or 262.1764 (8:00 A.M.-3:0 M.) Fax: 262.1764
Registration Nº. M.E. 546.1 MI

Staff: U.K. trained staff: 14 full-time, two part-time certified teachers.
Program: Primary syllabus based on the British curriculum as preparation for secondary education in the U.K. or English-speaking schools and international colleges elsewhere. Classes in English, with Spanish taught as a foreign language.
Facilities/Activities: Library, assembly hall, arts and craft room, science laboratory, audio-visual center, computers, playground, sports field and amphitheater. Hockey, soccer, Brownies, Girl Scouts, Cubs, Boy Scouts. Annual sports day, open evenings, prize-giving. House events and competitions.
Hours: 7:45 a.m. - 2:20 p.m.
Students bring their own snacks and drinks.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: May to June for the next school year. An effort is made to accommodate families arriving at different times of the year. There is occasionally a waiting list, especially in the reception class. Children are expected to enter with English-language competency.
School Year: Early September to early July
Fees: B

CENTRO INTEGRAL SIMON BOLIVAR

Calle La Serpentina
Lomas de Prados del Este (Final de Avda. El Parque y Calle La Lupe)
Tel.: 976.0473
Fax: 781.9912
Director: Elizabeth Anne Connell Burke
Founding Date: 1972
Accreditation: Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education.
Students: Mixed classes with 230 students aged from 2 1/2 to 14, in nursery through ninth grade. Classes have an average of 17 students and a maximum of 25 and are mainly composed of Venezuelans, with a variety of other nationalities.
Staff: Certified teachers, mainly Venezuelan. Specially-qualified teachers for physical education, music, drama and physical expression.
Program: Official Venezuelan program with the addition of U.S. arts, social studies and history. In pre-school, activities are mainly in English. In the elementary and secondary school programs, half of the day is dedicated to the Venezuelan program, and the other half to the U.S.-based program.
Facilities/Activities: Library, sports courts, spacious social area with kitchen and workshop activities. Airy, large, roofed multiple-use area. Pre-school outdoor area with playhouse and wooden climbing facility. Activities include music and drama.
Hours: Nursery and pre-school, 8:00 a.m. - noon
Elementary and secondary school, 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Students bring their own lunches.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: April, but pre-registration is accepted throughout the year. Space is generally available in the fall, and occasionally during the school year.
School Year: Oct. 1 - July 15
Fees: C
Other Facts: New secondary school building is under construction in Manzanares, scheduled for completion in January 1994.

CHILDREN'S WORLD
Final, Calle San Pedro
Sorocaima
La Trinidad
Tel.: 976.4511/4677/4766
Headmistress: Alicia de Pardo
Founding Date: 1976
Accreditation: -
Students: Groups of 15 per teacher, aged 2 to 6, through nursery and kindergarten. A variety of nationalities.
Staff: Seven full-time certified teachers, U.S.-trained.
Program: U.S.-oriented in Spanish and English. Introduction to reading, writing and numbers. Emphasis on creative art work. Discussion groups and songs.
Facilities/Activities: Swimming pool, courtyard garden, sandbox, water table. Classrooms for special activities and covered areas for play.
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Students bring their lunches.
Transportation: Mini-bus, extra charge.
Registration Date: May, but a waiting list exists for the youngest group.
School Year: Sept. 6 - June 15
Fees: D

COLEGIO EMIL FRIEDMAN
Los Campitos
Ruta A
Cumbres de Curumo
Tel.: 77.0611/0584/3062
Director: Emil Friedman
Founding Date: 1948
Accreditation: Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education.
Students: The 1,300 boys and girls are aged 4 to 17, studying from preschool to secondary levels, and are mainly Venezuelan.
Staff: Fully certified staff of Venezuelan teachers. English is taught by qualified English instructors.
Program: Official Venezuelan curriculum in Spanish, with English taught as a foreign language. Graduates receive the *bachiller en ciencias*. Emphasis on creativity, the arts, and high standards of scholastic excellence.
Facilities/Activities: Theater, acoustically designed music practice rooms, library, science laboratories, workshops for printing, carpentry, and electricity. Semi-Olympic swimming pool, sports courts, pre-school play area, vegetable gardens, small animal farm. The school has four choirs and four orchestras, and concerts are often held. Dance, drama, chess, gymnastics, science club, cooking and animal care.
Hours: 7:45 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Preschoolers are served hot lunches in the cafeteria; older students may bring their own lunches or purchase them in the cafeteria.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.

Registration Date: January. There is a large waiting list but students who show exceptional talents are given priority.
School Year: Sept. 16 - July 16
Fees: C
Other Facts: Scholarships are available for gifted children; there are now about 100 scholarship students.

COLEGIO FRANCIA (FRENCH SCHOOL)
Avda. D
Campo Claro
Tel.: 34.2179/0687
Fax: 34.0660
Director: Reinaldo Mora
Founding Date: 1951
Accreditation: Venezuelan Section - Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education. French Section - Listed with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education and officially recognized by the French government.
Students: Venezuelan Section - 750, aged 3 to 17. French Section - 650, aged 3 to 18. Grades are from preschool to secondary school in both sections, with classes of between 30 and 35. Graduates go on to university in Venezuela, France and Europe. To enter Venezuelan universities, French-section students must take a Venezuelan curriculum review course and a special equivalency exam.
Staff: Venezuelan Section - 57 Venezuelan teachers, fully certified. French Section - 58 teachers, fully certified, most of French nationality.
Program: Venezuelan Section - Official Venezuelan curriculum, graduates receive the *bachiller en ciencias*. They are taught in Spanish, with French as a second language in pre-school and English in secondary school. French Section - Official French curriculum. Graduates receive the French Baccalaureate. They are taught in French with Spanish as a foreign language beginning in pre-school, and English and German taught in secondary school.
Facilities/Activities: Two libraries, eight science laboratories, gymnasium, sports courts, play area. Activities include dance (ballet and jazz) and choir.
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.
Hot and cold canteen service is available for lunch, or students can bring their own snacks.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: May 15 - July 30. There is no waiting list in the Venezuelan section and every effort is made to accommodate children throughout the year from French families in the French section.
School Year: Venezuelan Section - Oct.1 to July 15. French Section - Sept.15 to June 30 for preschool and primary levels and Sept. 8 to June 30 for secondary school levels.
Fees: Children with diplomatic or corporate sponsors, A; all others, D.

COLEGIO HUMBOLDT (GERMAN SCHOOL)
Prolongación Avda. El Estanque
Country Club Norte
Tel.: 74.0580/2817/3395
Fax: 74.9343

CHILDREN'S WORLD
Final, Calle San Pedro
Sorocaima
La Trinidad
Tel.: 976.4511/4677/4766
Headmistress: Alicia de Pardo
Founding Date: 1976
Accreditation: -
Students: Groups of 15 per teacher, aged 2 to 6, through nursery and kindergarten. A variety of nationalities.
Staff: Seven full-time certified teachers, U.S.-trained.
Program: U.S.-oriented in Spanish and English. Introduction to reading, writing and numbers. Emphasis on creative art work. Discussion groups and songs.
Facilities/Activities: Swimming pool, courtyard garden, sandbox, water table. Classrooms for special activities and covered areas for play.
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Students bring their lunches.
Transportation: Mini-bus, extra charge.
Registration Date: May, but a waiting list exists for the youngest group.
School Year: Sept. 6 - June 15
Fees: D

COLEGIO EMIL FRIEDMAN
Los Campitos
Ruta A
Cumbres de Curumo
Tel.: 77.0611/0584/3062
Director: Emil Friedman
Founding Date: 1948
Accreditation: Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education.
Students: The 1,300 boys and girls are aged 4 to 17, studying from preschool to secondary levels, and are mainly Venezuelan.
Staff: Fully certified staff of Venezuelan teachers. English is taught by qualified English instructors.
Program: Official Venezuelan curriculum in Spanish, with English taught as a foreign language. Graduates receive the *bachiller en ciencias*. Emphasis on creativity, the arts, and high standards of scholastic excellence.
Facilities/Activities: Theater, acoustically designed music practice rooms, library, science laboratories, workshops for printing, carpentry, and electricity. Semi-Olympic swimming pool, sports courts, pre-school play area, vegetable gardens, small animal farm. The school has four choirs and four orchestras, and concerts are often held. Dance, drama, chess, gymnastics, science club, cooking and animal care.
Hours: 7:45 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Preschoolers are served hot lunches in the cafeteria; older students may bring their own lunches or purchase them in the cafeteria.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.

Registration Date: January. There is a large waiting list but students who show exceptional talents are given priority.
School Year: Sept. 16 - July 16
Fees: C
Other Facts: Scholarships are available for gifted children; there are now about 100 scholarship students.

COLEGIO FRANCIA (FRENCH SCHOOL)
Avda. D
Campo Claro
Tel.: 34.2179/0687
Fax: 34.0660
Director: Reinaldo Mora
Founding Date: 1951
Accreditation: Venezuelan Section - Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education. French Section - Listed with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education and officially recognized by the French government.
Students: Venezuelan Section - 750, aged 3 to 17. French Section - 650, aged 3 to 18. Grades are from preschool to secondary school in both sections, with classes of between 30 and 35. Graduates go on to university in Venezuela, France and Europe. To enter Venezuelan universities, French-section students must take a Venezuelan curriculum review course and a special equivalency exam.
Staff: Venezuelan Section - 57 Venezuelan teachers, fully certified. French Section - 58 teachers, fully certified, most of French nationality.
Program: Venezuelan Section - Official Venezuelan curriculum, graduates receive the *bachiller en ciencias*. They are taught in Spanish, with French as a second language in pre-school and English in secondary school. French Section - Official French curriculum. Graduates receive the French Baccalaureate. They are taught in French with Spanish as a foreign language beginning in pre-school, and English and German taught in secondary school.
Facilities/Activities: Two libraries, eight science laboratories, gymnasium, sports courts, play area. Activities include dance (ballet and jazz) and choir.
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.
Hot and cold canteen service is available for lunch, or students can bring their own snacks.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: May 15 - July 30. There is no waiting list in the Venezuelan section and every effort is made to accommodate children throughout the year from French families in the French section.
School Year: Venezuelan Section - Oct.1 to July 15. French Section - Sept.15 to June 30 for preschool and primary levels and Sept. 8 to June 30 for secondary school levels.
Fees: Children with diplomatic or corporate sponsors, A; all others, D.

COLEGIO HUMBOLDT (GERMAN SCHOOL)
Prolongación Avda. El Estanque
Country Club Norte
Tel.: 74.0580/2817/3395
Fax: 74.9343

CHILDREN'S WORLD
Final, Calle San Pedro
Sorocaima
La Trinidad
Tel.: 976.4511/4677/4766
Headmistress: Alicia de Pardo
Founding Date: 1976
Accreditation: -
Students: Groups of 15 per teacher, aged 2 to 6, through nursery and kindergarten. A variety of nationalities.
Staff: Seven full-time certified teachers, U.S.-trained.
Program: U.S.-oriented in Spanish and English. Introduction to reading, writing and numbers. Emphasis on creative art work. Discussion groups and songs.
Facilities/Activities: Swimming pool, courtyard garden, sandbox, water table. Classrooms for special activities and covered areas for play.
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Students bring their lunches.
Transportation: Mini-bus, extra charge.
Registration Date: May, but a waiting list exists for the youngest group.
School Year: Sept. 6 - June 15
Fees: D

COLEGIO EMIL FRIEDMAN
Los Campitos
Ruta A
Cumbres de Curumo
Tel.: 77.0611/0584/3062
Director: Emil Friedman
Founding Date: 1948
Accreditation: Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education.
Students: The 1,300 boys and girls are aged 4 to 17, studying from preschool to secondary levels, and are mainly Venezuelan.
Staff: Fully certified staff of Venezuelan teachers. English is taught by qualified English instructors.
Program: Official Venezuelan curriculum in Spanish, with English taught as a foreign language. Graduates receive the *bachiller en ciencias*. Emphasis on creativity, the arts, and high standards of scholastic excellence.
Facilities/Activities: Theater, acoustically designed music practice rooms, library, science laboratories, workshops for printing, carpentry, and electricity. Semi-Olympic swimming pool, sports courts, pre-school play area, vegetable gardens, small animal farm. The school has four choirs and four orchestras, and concerts are often held. Dance, drama, chess, gymnastics, science club, cooking and animal care.
Hours: 7:45 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Preschoolers are served hot lunches in the cafeteria; older students may bring their own lunches or purchase them in the cafeteria.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.

Registration Date: January. There is a large waiting list but students who show exceptional talents are given priority.
School Year: Sept. 16 - July 16
Fees: C
Other Facts: Scholarships are available for gifted children; there are now about 100 scholarship students.

COLEGIO FRANCIA (FRENCH SCHOOL)
Avda. D
Campo Claro
Tel.: 34.2179/0687
Fax: 34.0660
Director: Reinaldo Mora
Founding Date: 1951
Accreditation: Venezuelan Section - Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education. French Section - Listed with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education and officially recognized by the French government.
Students: Venezuelan Section - 750, aged 3 to 17. French Section - 650, aged 3 to 18. Grades are from preschool to secondary school in both sections, with classes of between 30 and 35. Graduates go on to university in Venezuela, France and Europe. To enter Venezuelan universities, French-section students must take a Venezuelan curriculum review course and a special equivalency exam.
Staff: Venezuelan Section - 57 Venezuelan teachers, fully certified. French Section - 58 teachers, fully certified, most of French nationality.
Program: Venezuelan Section - Official Venezuelan curriculum, graduates receive the *bachiller en ciencias*. They are taught in Spanish, with French as a second language in pre-school and English in secondary school. French Section - Official French curriculum. Graduates receive the French Baccalaureate. They are taught in French with Spanish as a foreign language beginning in pre-school, and English and German taught in secondary school.
Facilities/Activities: Two libraries, eight science laboratories, gymnasium, sports courts, play area. Activities include dance (ballet and jazz) and choir.
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.
Hot and cold canteen service is available for lunch, or students can bring their own snacks.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: May 15 - July 30. There is no waiting list in the Venezuelan section and every effort is made to accommodate children throughout the year from French families in the French section.
School Year: Venezuelan Section - Oct.1 to July 15. French Section - Sept.15 to June 30 for preschool and primary levels and Sept. 8 to June 30 for secondary school levels.
Fees: Children with diplomatic or corporate sponsors, A; all others, D.

COLEGIO HUMBOLDT (GERMAN SCHOOL)
Prolongación Avda. El Estanque
Country Club Norte
Tel.: 74.0580/2817/3395
Fax: 74.9343

Colegio Internacional de Caracas

THE AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN CARACAS
NURSERY THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL
ACCREDITED BY THE SOUTHERN ASSN. OF COLLEGES & SCHOOLS

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

- Individual attention to student needs - Limited class size.
- Established International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement Programs.
- Resource Center for children with special learning needs.
- ESOL - English for Speakers of other languages Program.
- Gifted and Talented program.
- Strong commitment to college guidance and counseling.
- Cafeteria serving nutritious breakfasts and lunches.
- New Program in Nursery school - minimum age 3 years old by November 1st.

Help your child attain his or her potential - call:

Telephones: 93.04.44 - 93.05.08 - 93.07.08

Director, German Section: Kurt Eckhardt
Director, Venezuelan Section: Ana María Pereira
Founding Date: 1894
Accreditation: Venezuelan Section - registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education. German Section - listed with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education and officially recognized by the German government.
Students: More than 1,100 boys and girls aged 5 to 19, from kindergarten to high school, in classes averaging 20 students. Graduates go to universities in Venezuela, Europe and the United States. Those who pass the Abitur after 13 years of schooling may obtain their *bachiller en ciencias* or *humanidades* by taking an exam offered by the Venezuelan Ministry of Education and then may apply to enter Venezuelan universities.
Staff: Venezuelan Section - 60 Venezuelan teachers, fully certified. German Section - 30 teachers, fully certified, most of German nationality.
Program: Venezuelan Section - Official Venezuelan curriculum, taught in Spanish. Graduates receive the *bachiller en ciencias* or *humanidades*. German is taught as a foreign language in *preparatorio* and English is taught at high-school level. Optional French. German Section - Equivalent to the standard course students receive in Germany (Realschulabschluss and Abitur). Lessons are in German with Spanish taught as a foreign language in first grade and English and French offered later in the school.
Facilities/Activities: Library, laboratories, auditorium, theater, computer courses, music room with piano, gym, sports area and swimming pool. Sports include basketball, volleyball, swimming, football and gymnastics.

Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Some high school classes are taught Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 2:00 p.m. - 5:10 p.m.
Lunch is available in the school cafeteria.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: May for returning students. Kindergarten pre-registration starts in January. There is no waiting list in the Venezuelan section and every effort is made to allow students in the German section to join throughout the year.
School Year: Oct. 1 - late July
Fees: C/D

COLEGIO INTERNACIONAL DE CARACAS
Los Samanes
Calle Colegio Americano
U.S. mailing address:
POBA International No. 233
P.O. Box 02-5255,
Miami, Fla. 33102-5255
Tel.: 93.0444/0507/0708
Fax: 93.0533
Director: Brian McCauley
Founding Date: 1971
Accreditation: Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education. Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Member of Association of American Schools in South America, Association of Colombian-Caribbean American Schools, Inter-Regional Center for Curriculum Development, and Venezuelan Association of North American Schools.
Students: Total of 550 boys and girls from 46 different nationalities, aged from 3 to 18 from nursery through grade 12. Class sizes average 17 in elementary and 11 in high school. Most graduates continue their studies in U.S., European and Asian universities.
Staff: The 70-member teaching staff all have U.S. degrees or equivalent, many with master's degrees. There are seven teachers' aides and five specialists in charge of special programs and counseling.
Program: College preparatory program for students planning to attend U.S. or other foreign universities. High school teaching in English features 29 advanced placement courses and the complete International Baccalaurate Program. Spanish is taught in elementary school and high school. French, German, Italian and Japanese are all offered in addition to a full program of English for speakers of other languages.
Facilities/Activities: Health service with a full-time registered nurse. Library, three computer laboratories, auditorium, art and music facilities, tennis, basketball, and volleyball courts and playing fields. Other activities include National Honor Society, Model United Nations, choir, community services, chess, computer, drama, merengue, photography, scuba and snorkling, and cheerleading.
Hours: Nursery and pre-kinder, 7:50 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Pre-kinder afternoon, 11:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Kinder to grade 6, 7:50 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Grades 7 - 12, 7:50 a.m. - 2:55 p.m.
Lunches available.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.

Registration Date: April, but a waiting list sometimes exists.
School Year: Late August to mid-June
Fees: A

COLEGIO JEFFERSON
Calle T con Calle D
Colinas de Valle Arriba
Tel.: 976.6311/4439/4144/5111
Fax: 976.5718
Principal: Inés Sucre Fombona
Founding Date: 1974
Accreditation: National Association of Independent Schools. Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education.
Students: Mixed classes of 30 students at the most, of various nationalities but mainly Venezuelan. There are 873 students aged 4 to 10, from pre-kinder through grade 12.
Staff: More than 50 certified teachers, mainly Venezuelan. U.S. teachers hold degrees in education.
Program: Basic Venezuelan curriculum, with languages, U.S. social studies and history. Bilingual English and Spanish.
Facilities/Activities: Library, audio-visual equipment, sportsfield, art room, computer courses, and laboratories. Sports include soccer, aerobics, kickball and karate.
Hours: Pre-kinder and kinder, 8:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.
Primary, 8:00 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
Secondary, 7:30 a.m. - 2:25 p.m.
Students bring their own lunches and drinks, or buy their lunches in the school cafeteria.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: May 1. Long waiting list with preference given to families that are on long-stay transfers.
School Year: Oct.1 - July 15
Fees: B/C

COLEGIO LA CONCORDIA
Avda. Tocuyo
Colinas de Bello Monte
Tel.: 752.3482 (School, Spanish only)
751.1468 (English, ask for Rev. Mike Wakeland)
Fax: 752.4683 (Rev. Mike Wakeland)
Director: Hernani Herrera
Founding Date: 1952
Accreditation: Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education.
Students: The school has 400 boys and girls aged 4 to 18 in preschool, primary and secondary levels. Classes have no more than 35 students, who are mostly Venezuelan.
Staff: Two U.S. English teachers and 40 Venezuelan staff members.
Program: Venezuelan curriculum, with English, music, and Christian education in the primary grades. Graduates receive the *bachiller en ciencias*. Classes are in Spanish with English taught two days a week in the primary grades and three to four days a week in secondary levels.

Facilities/Activities: Laboratories, library, and recreational area for soccer, volleyball and basketball. The school also has a choir and drama group.
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Students return home in time for lunch. Snack-bar service available for morning recess.
Transportation: Limited bus route in the Colinas de Bello Monte, Los Chaguaramos, Santa Mónica, and Cumbres de Curumo area. Extra charge for bus service.
Registration Date: March. Space is available in preschool and primary, but secondary school may be full.
School Year: Oct. 1 - July 15
Fees: D
Other Facts: Located on the same grounds as El Salvador Lutheran Church.

COLEGIO SANTA ROSA DE LIMA
Avda. Eraso
San Román
Tel.: 91.4966
Director: Sor Purificación Maldonado
Founding Date: 1955
Accreditation: Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education. Administration under the direction of the Domínicas de Granada.
Students: Girls only, with 1,400 students aged 3 to 17 through preschool and secondary levels. Classes have no more than 40 students, mostly Venezuelan.
Staff: Fully licensed, secular Venezuelan.
Program: Official Venezuelan curriculum offering *bachilleratos* in both *ciencias* and *humanidades*. Classes in Spanish with English taught as a foreign language and optional French and Latin.
Facilities/Activities: Library, theater, sports fields, audio-visual equipment. Activities include rhythmic gymnastics, basketball, volleyball, jazz, guitar, *cuatro*, piano, ceramics and theater.
Hours: Preschool through *preparatorio*, 8.00 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.
Primary, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
High school, 7:20 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., with some classes until 2:30 p.m.
Lunch is available in school cafeterias.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: April. Primary school students must take an exam while secondary students need to formally revalidate previous schoolwork.
School Year: October - July
Fees: D

COLEGIO ST. GEORGE
Quinta Oritápano
Avda. Principal San Marino
Campo Alegre
Tel.: 33.1323, 32.1243
Director: Lyda Hernández
Founding Date: 1949

Accreditation: Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education. Listed with the British Embassy.
Students: The 200 boys and girls are mainly Venezuelan and are aged 3 to 12, with classes from preschool to sixth grade. Average class size is 25.
Staff: Eight full-time, licensed Venezuelan teachers. Part-time English instructors are all native speakers.
Program: Official Venezuelan curriculum taught in Spanish with two hours a day of English.
Facilities/Activities: Library, patio area for physical education, swimming one hour a week at the Teo Capriles pool in La Castellana.
Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Students bring their own lunches and drinks.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: January
School Year: October - July
Fees: D

COLEGIO VERMONT
Quinta Alberto
Transversal 8 (esquina 3 Bis)
Altamira
Tel.: 261.1267
Director: Alba de Sola
Founding Date: 1977
Accreditation: Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education.
Students: The 150 boys and girls are aged 3 to 12 in classes from nursery school to sixth grade. Maximum class size is 25, most of whom are Venezuelans.
Staff: There are 13 certified Venezuelan teachers, a number of whom have studied in English-speaking countries.
Program: Follows the Venezuelan curriculum in Spanish with additional emphasis on the English language. Teaching aids and textbooks are brought to the school from the United States and Canada. Typing is taught in the fifth and sixth grades. Religious education available for Catholic students.
Facilities/Activities: Library, computers, audio-visual materials. Field trips. U.S. and Venezuelan holidays are celebrated.
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Students bring their own lunches and drinks.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: From April 15
School Year: Oct. 1 - July 15
Fees: D

EDUPLIN (EDUCACION PLANIFICADA INTERNACIONAL)
Calle 11 entre 3ra. y 5ra. Avda.
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 285.7547
Director: Tove Mentzoni
Founding Date: 1971

Accreditation: Registered with the Ministry of Education.
Students: The 280 boys and girls are aged 2 to 6 and go through preschool to *preparatorio* in classes of about 30 students, most of whom are Venezuelans.
Staff: There are 25 fully-licensed teachers, including specialists for English, computers and music. Two teachers per class.
Program: Official Venezuelan curriculum in Spanish with additional Montessori and Froebel materials. Emphasis on music, dance, rhythm, singing. English is taught as a foreign language in two half-hour classes every week.
Facilities/Activities: Large playground, garden, auditorium with piano, stage and gymnasium. Activities include dance and theater.
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - noon
Students bring their own snacks and drinks.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: May. New students must be tested by the school psychologist starting in January. There is a long waiting list.
School Year: Mid-September to early July
Fees: C

ESCUELA CAMPO ALEGRE
Calle La Cinta
Las Mercedes
U.S. mailing address:
Jet Cargo International, M-314
P.O. Box 02-0010
Miami, Fla. 33102-0010.
Tel.: 752.7389/3790/8402, 751.1056/4109
Fax: 751.5146
Director: Forrest Broman
Founding Date: 1938
Accreditation: Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education. Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; member of National Association of Independent Schools, Association of American Schools in South America, Association of Colombian-Caribbean American Schools, Inter-Regional Center for Curriculum Development, Venezuelan Association of North American Schools, Educational Testing Service and Educational Records Bureau.
Students: There are 1,000 boys and girls aged 4 to 18 in classes from pre-kinder through grade 12. Students represent 53 different nationalities and classes have no more than 22 students.
Staff: Professional staff of 130, of which 80 percent have U.S. degrees, and 33 percent have master's degrees.
Program: U.S. college preparatory program with advanced placement courses offered in English, social studies, mathematics, science, Spanish and French. International Bacalaureate program. There is a separate middle school for seventh and eighth grades. Classes are in English with Spanish and French taught as foreign languages.
Facilities/Activities: Health service with full-time registered nurse. Computerized library, two computer rooms, modern theater, five science laboratories, basketball courts, playing fields and gymnasium. The school has Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops.

ESCUELA CAMPO ALEGRE

Highest Quality U.S./International Education in Caracas for Over 50 Years

VISIT AND COMPARE

- International Baccalaureate Program from 1993-94
- Pre-kinder through Grade 12 with outstanding teachers
- University Preparatory Program
- Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools
- Limited class size
- Ratio of students to professional staff 9:1
- International student body with over 50 nationalities
- Guidance staff, including 5 counselors and a psychologist
- Programs for gifted students incorporated into every class
- Library with on-line catalog covering its 32,000 volumes
- Two modern computer laboratories
- ESL program and LD program for mild learning disabilities
- Academic tutorial program
- Complete art and music program
- Spanish instruction for all students
- Interscholastic & Intramural sports program
- Wide range of co-curricular & extra-curricular activities
- Standardized testing program
- Advanced Placement courses
- College and university placement program
- Theatre arts program and facility
- Convenient school bus service available
- Full-time nurse

Please phone to make an appointment to visit the school at any time

Calle La Cinta • Las Mercedes (Apto. del Este 60382)
Caracas 1060-A
Phones: 752-8402/3709/7389 • 751-1056/4109/2476
Fax: 751-5146

Hours: Pre-kinder, 8:00 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.
Pre-kinder afternoon, 1:50 a.m. - 2:51 p.m.
Kindergarten - grade 12, 8:00 a.m. - 2:51 p.m.
Students bring their own lunches. Cafeteria service for grades 7-12.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: April for returning families; May for new families. There is sometimes a waiting list.
School Year: Late August to mid-June
Fees: A

INSTITUTO EDUCACIONAL HENRY CLAY
4ta. Avda. Campo Alegre
Tel.: 33.4034/1452 (new numbers pending)
Fax: 33.4034
Director: María Sylvia Rodríguez
Founding Date: 1980
Accreditation: Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education.
Students: The 300 boys and girls are aged 6 to 18 in study elementary levels through high school, with a maximum of 25 students per class. Mainly Venezuelan.
Staff: All staff are certified either in Venezuela or the United States.
Program: Venezuelan program offering *bachilleratos* in either *humanidades* or *ciencias*. Some 14 hours of intensive English every week guarantees mastery of the language.
Facilities/Activities: Library, playground, multiple sports court, school newspaper, computers, *cuatro* lessons.
Hours: 7:15 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
There is a school canteen.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: January to May. Due to a waiting list, parents are advised to pre-register their children one to two years in advance. Spaces are occasionally available for fall and mid-year arrivals from overseas.
School Year: Oct. 1 to July 15
Fees: C

LEAP (La Escuela Donde se Aprende con Placer - The School Where One Learns With Pleasure)
Quinta Blanca
Final 6ta. Transversal
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 283.2794, 284.6179
Directors: Cynthia López and Nadine Beall
Founding Date: 1984
Accreditation: Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education.
Students: The 70 boys and girls represent a variety of nationalities. They are aged 2 1/2 to 7 and study in classes of 20 or fewer from pre-school through second grade.
Staff: Five U.S. accredited, six British or Venezuelan teachers.
Program: LEAP facilitates each child's academic growth with an individualized educational plan, taught in English.

Facilities/Activities: Library, computer facilities, ample outside playgrounds available. Open area for classrooms.
Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Students bring their own snacks and drinks.
Transportation: Private bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: June. There is a long waiting list, although students may be admitted at the discretion of the directors.
School Year: September to June
Fees: C

MADISON LEARNING CENTER
Quinta Amaer (pre-school)
Calle Soledad, El Cafetal
Tel.: 987.3337
Quinta Morelera (primary)
Calle Carúpano y Calle El Morao, El Cafetal
Tel.: 986.6190, 987.6465
Quinta San Judas Tadeo (high school)
Calle Santa Ana y Calle Maturín, El Cafetal
Tel.: 985.3259, 986.6445
Director: Ilse de Vázquez
Founding Date: 1978
Accreditation: Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education.
Students: Co-educational with 120 preschool and *preparatorio* students, 220 primary, and 154 secondary. Ages range from 3 to 17, from nursery school to 11th grade, with a maximum of 20 students per class, most of whom are Venezuelans.
Staff: There are 38 full-time certified teachers and 12 specialized English teachers.
Program: Comprehensive Venezuelan and North American program taught in Spanish and English.
Facilities/Activities: Outdoor classrooms, play area, a variety of toys and teaching aids, swimming and computer facilities.
Hours: Pre-school, 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Primary and high school, 7:30 a.m.- 2:45 p.m.
A canteen service is available or students may bring their own snacks and drinks.
Transportation: Private school bus service.
Registration Date: May. There is limited space and a waiting list.
School Year: Oct.1 to July 15
Fees: D

MI CASITA BLANCA
9na. Transversal
Entre 4ta. y 5ta. Avda.
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 284.7083, 283.9778, 285.0026
Director: Maritza Escalona
Founding Date: 1979
Accreditation: Registered with the Ministry of Education.

Students: The 300 boys and girls represent a number of nationalities, including Venezuelan, American, French and Japanese. Ages range from 1 1/2 to 8 1/2 in grades from nursery school through *preparatorio*. Maximum class size is 30 students.
Staff: A total of 21, including 11 teachers, a child psychologist and assistants.
Program: Official Venezuelan curriculum with Spanish, Italian and English instruction.
Facilities/Activities: Outside play areas, large covered outside area for gym classes. Music, ballet and karate are also offered.
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (without lunch)
7:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (with lunch)
7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (with lunch and snack)
Transportation: Private bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: June. There is no waiting list. Short-term registration is also available for families needing a school for only a few months.
School Year: Sept. 15 to July 31
Fees: D

PRESCHOLAR LOS NARANJOS
Calle Arturo Michelena, No. 2-12
Sector Los Naranjos
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.2337
Director: Flor Straetger
Founding Date: 1973
Students: The 35 boys and girls are primarily Venezuelan, although other nationalities are represented. Ages range from 2 to 5 1/2 and students are taught in classes of about 12.
Staff: Venezuelan, all with certification in preschool or special education.
Program: Various activity areas, with half of the day spent in free activities, and half in teacher-directed activities. In Spanish.
Facilities/Activities: Play areas, sand box, audiovisual equipment, computer.
Hours: 8:00 a.m.- noon
Students bring their own snacks
Transportation: Private bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: May to July
School Year: Oct. 1 to July 15
Fees: D
Other Facts: Children with special needs are accepted, and taught with children at the same level, rather than mainstreaming by age.

THE PRESCHOOL
Calle Río Orinoco con Calle Guaire
Colinas de Bello Monte
Tel.: 752.3367
Head Mistress: María Hernández
Founding Date: 1972
Students: The 80 boys and girls are mainly Venezuelan. Age range is from 2 to 4, with about 20 students per class.

Staff: One teacher and one assistant per class, with one English-language coordinator. All certified teachers.
Program: A stimulating environment of toys, play, conversation, story-telling, music, painting, plants and animals, all designed to instill a desire to learn. In English and Spanish but with greater emphasis on English.
Facilities/Activities: Playground, sandbox, yard.
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - noon
Students bring their own snacks.
Transportation: Car pools or independent transport.
Registration Date: April. There is a long waiting list.
School Year: Sept. 20 - July 15
Fees: D

UNIDAD EDUCATIVA AGUSTIN CODAZZI (ITALIAN SCHOOL)
Quinta Elisa
Avda. Los Pinos
La Florida
Tel.: 74.3664/3628/3947
Fax: 74.5198
Director General: Vincenze Ruggiero
Founding Date: 1951
Accreditation: Venezuelan Section - Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education. Italian Section - Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education and officially accepted by the Italian government.
Students: The 1,100 boys and girls are generally either Italian or Venezuelan of Italian descent. Ages range from 3 to 17, with grades from pre-school to secondary school in the Venezuelan section, but only secondary school in the Italian section. Classes are of not more than 30 students.
Staff: Venezuelan Section - 35 full-time Venezuelan teachers. Italian Section - 16 full-time Italian teachers, some sent abroad on assignment by the Italian government.
Program: Venezuelan Section - Official Venezuelan curriculum, with graduates receiving the *bachiller en ciencias* or *humanidades* as of 1993-94. In Spanish, with Italian offered as a language beginning in preschool, English offered in secondary school, and French to be offered starting 1993-94. Italian Section - Official Italian curriculum, and graduates complete a program in sciences. Classes in Italian with Spanish and English offered.
Facilities/Activities: Large, modern laboratories, library, concrete gym area, playing fields for basketball, volleyball and soccer. Music rooms and theater.
Hours: 7:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.
Canteen service is available or students may bring their own lunches.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: March and April
School Year: Oct. 1 to July 15
Fees: D

WASHINGTON ACADEMY
Calle C
Valle Arriba
Tel.: 976.3401/3404
Head Mistress: Katharine Tugendhat
Founding Date: 1966
Accreditation: Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education.
Students: The 440 boys and girls are aged 4 to 17 and study from nursery school through 12th grade in classes of not more than 20 students, most of whom are Venezuelan.
Staff: The 50 staff members, most of whom are Venezuelans, all have teaching credentials.
Program: In primary school, all subjects are taught in English, except Venezuelan social studies, history and geography. The secondary school follows the Venezuelan program for the *bachiller en ciencias* with math taught in English.
Facilities/Activities: Library, computer room, multipurpose room, laboratories, sports field for track and field, soccer, basketball, gymnastics and volleyball. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and flamenco dancing are offered as activities.
Hours: Nursery and kindergarten, 7:30 a.m. - 11:45 p.m.
Grades 1 - 12, 7:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Canteen lunch available or students bring their own snacks and drinks.
Transportation: Responsibility of the parents.
Registration Date: June. There is a very long waiting list and only English-speaking children are admitted after the first grade.
School Year: Oct. 1 to July 15
Fees: C

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

HARD AT WORK - A second grader does her homework after a day at school.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS OUTSIDE CARACAS

CHRISTIANSEN ACADEMY
Avda. 8 No.18-49
Rubio, Estado Táchira
Tel.: (076) 62.3162
Fax: (076) 62.0396
Director: David K. Schlonecker
Founding Date: 1952
Accreditation: Member of Association of Christian Schools International.
Students: The 118 boys and girls represent a variety of nationalities, but most are from the United States, with a reasonably large proportion of Venezuelan students. Children must be 6 years old before they can enter first grade, and they study through 12th grade in classes not larger than 15. Boarding is not recommended until at least the fifth grade. More than 95 percent of graduates go on to U.S. or Canadian colleges.
Staff: All staff members are U.S. or Canadian nationals and hold certification in their respective state or province.
Program: U.S. curriculum in English. Learning Disabilities Program.
Facilities/Activities: Four dormitories, computer room, guest facilities, wood shop, automotive shop, athletic fields and playing courts. Activities include church council, choir, community outreach and drama.
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 3:05 p.m.
Transportation: None provided by school. Families arriving at start of term share cabs from airport.
Registration Date: June 15. There is no waiting list but most students are from missionary families. Non-mission children are accepted only on a space-available basis.
School Year: September to June
Other Facts: The school regards the training of children to be the shared responsibility of home, church and school. All parents must understand this philosophy of education, which has Jesus Christ at its foundation. The school is located in downtown Rubio in the foothills of the Andes at an elevation of 2,700 feet. Christiansen Academy is 35 minutes from San Cristóbal and 30 minutes from San Antonio de Táchira, site of the nearest airport.
Fees: A

COLEGIO INTERNACIONAL DE CARABOBO
Avda. Zuloaga, Cruce con Colegio
El Trigal
Valencia
Tel.: 42.6551/6510
Fax: 42.6510
Director: Frank Anderson
Founding Date: 1957
Accreditation: Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Member of the Venezuelan Association of North American Schools.
Students: About one-fourth of the 250 boys and girls are American, with the others representing a variety of nationalities. Ages range from 4 to 18, with students studying from pre-kindergarten to grade 12 in classes of not more than 18.
Staff: The 40 staff members are mainly American.

Program: U.S. curriculum, with the addition of Venezuelan social studies in the elementary school. Classes in English with Spanish taught at all grade levels and French offered at high school level.
Facilities/Activities: Gymnasium, playing fields, two computer labs, two libraries. After-school activities include softball, soccer, basketball and volleyball teams, choir, and participation in the Model United Nations.
Hours: Elementary school, 8:05 a.m. - 2:40 p.m.
High school, 7:45 a.m. - 2:40 p.m.
Students bring their own lunches.
Transportation: Bus service serving parts of Valencia.
Registration Date: May 1 - 21. There is a short waiting list, but every effort is made to place children arriving from the United States during the school year. New international students are required to take an exam to determine educational level.
School Year: Aug. 24 - June 8
Fees: A

COLEGIO INTERNACIONAL DE PUERTO ORDAZ
Calle Mediterráneo
24 Urb. Los Olivos
Puerto Ordaz
Tel. and Fax: 29.1031
Principal: Judith Blake
Founding Date: 1989
Accreditation: Affiliated with Colegio Internacional de Caracas which is registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education and accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
Students: There are 25 boys and girls aged between 6 and 14 in first through eighth grades.
Staff: Six teaching staffers with U.S. degrees, or the equivalent, plus three visiting specialists.
Program: Based on U.S. and international systems of education in English with Spanish offered.
Facilities/Activities: Library, computer laboratory, basketball area, music and drama.
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Students bring their own lunches.
Transportation: Independent bus service at no charge.
Registration Date: May. There is no waiting list.
School Year: Late August to mid-June
Fees: A

ESCUELA BELLA VISTA
Calle 67 entre Avda. 3D y 3E
Maracaibo
Tel.: 91.1674/1696
Fax: (016) 94.9417
Director: Bert Webb
Founding Date: 1948
Accreditation: Accredited by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Member of Venezuelan Association of North American Schools. Registered with the Venezuelan Ministry of Education.

Escuela Bella Vista

WHERE A QUALITY EDUCATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

We provide:

* A traditional United States academic curriculum, grades N-12.
* Small classes with qualified, dedicated teachers.
* English as a Second Language Program.
* Spanish instruction at all levels.
* Competitive sports and extracurricular activities.
* Computer laboratory classes.
* A college/university placement program.
* Art, music, physical education programs.
* Special student needs support program.

We have been an educational leader, in Maracaibo, since 1948. Come and visit our school.

ACCREDITED BY SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS.

Address: Calle 67 entre Ave. 3D y 3E.
Maracaibo, Venezuela.

Telephone: (58) (61) 911674 / 911696
Facsimile: (58) (61) 919417

Students: Some 300 boys and girls representing 22 different nationalities, aged 3 to 18 in classes from nursery school to 12th grade in classes of no more than 15 students.
Staff: Staff of 36, with 40 percent from the United States and eight with master's degrees, and six teacher's aides.
Program: The curiculum is U.S.-oriented and directed toward college preparatory objectives. Spanish language and Venezuelan social studies are included for second through 12th grades.
Advanced preparatory courses offered in Spanish, economics and government.
Facilities/Activities: Library, computer and science laboratories, basketball and volleyball courts, playing field, tennis courts and playgrounds. Activities include band, field trips, clubs and participation in the Model United Nations.
Hours: Nursery school to pre-kinder, 8:00 a.m. - noon
Kindergarten through second grade, 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Grades 3 through 12, 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Hot lunches available in school cafeteria.
Transportation: Independent bus service, extra charge.
Registration Date: Early May
School Year: Late August to mid-June
Fees: A

HIGHER EDUCATION

In Venezuela, the term "higher education" covers not only universities and teachers' colleges or *institutos pedagógicos*, but also three-year technical schools or *colegios* or *institutos universitarios* and other institutions.

There are more than 100 of these nationwide, both public and private, half of which are located in the Caracas metropolitan area and Federal District. Total enrollment is well over 300,000, with public institutions shouldering most of the student load.

Most universities offer both undergraduate and graduate programs. Public universities tend to be larger and to offer a wider range of professional schools and academic programs than do private universities. However, public universities are often overcrowded, short on materials and periodically disrupted by political demonstrations. At private universities - some of which provide a broad range of major fields - the political climate tends to be calmer.

There are three basic types of undergraduate degrees: *técnico superior*, a three-year, non-thesis program roughly equivalent to an associate's degree in the United States; *licenciado*, a five-year, non-thesis degree; and *ingeniero*, a five-year degree that requires a thesis or special project. The last two are roughly equivalent to an undergraduate degree in the United States.

Graduates of teachers' training colleges receive the title of Profesor in their area of specialization. Both physicians and lawyers use the title Doctor after completing their programs - five years for law, and six years plus internships for medicine.

To obtain admission as a regular student at a Venezuelan university, applicants must first "revalidate" their education. Proof of having satisfactorily completed secondary school is needed, along with certified copies of diplomas, copies of grades, and other documents. Graduates of foreign secondary schools must also take the *prueba de aptitud academica* (PAA), which is offered once a year in March, as well as a special examination in Venezuelan

history and civics arranged by the Ministry of Education. Other requirements may also be set by the Ministry of Education.

Revalidation is more complicated for students pursuing a graduate degree, and for anyone with a foreign degree who wants to work in a profession like engineering or medicine. Equivalency, or transfer credit, may be awarded for part of the coursework done toward a foreign degree if the degree itself is not revalidated.

Degrees can only be revalidated by one of the public universities. The process requires academic transcripts, diplomas, college catalogs describing the specific courses taken and course syllabi. These should all have been signed by the college or university registrar, by a notary public in the county of the college or university, the Department of State where the college or university is located, and the Venezuelan consul with jurisdiction. If the transcript shows transfer credits, this legalization must be done for documents from the original college or university. Most universities in the United States with a large foreign student population have experience with this type of paperwork.

More information on revalidation or equivalency can be obtained from Dilia González, Jefe de Revalidas y Equivalencias, Universidad Central de Venezuela, Centro Comercial Los Chaguaramos, Piso 6, Oficina 6-12, Los Chaguaramos, Caracas; or Kitty Kaar at the Asociación Venezolano-Americana de Amistad, Edif. Blandón, Chacaíto, Caracas (Tel.: 951.0386/0214/0356).

Entrance requirements are not so rigorous for part-time study. Interested students should contact each university for specific information on part-time or evening courses as well as entrance requirements. Many universities have continuing education courses in the evenings and weekends that are advertised in the local papers. Admission at the Ph.D. level for those already holding a master's degree is much easier, since the graduate coursework need not be revalidated.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN CARACAS

UNIVERSITIES

There are seven major universities in the Caracas area, three of which are private. Details on all institutions and their admissions requirements can be obtained from the Consejo Nacional de Universidades, Centro de Información y Atención al Publico, Centro Capriles Terraza L, Plaza Venezuela (Tel.: 782.3750/3101/3963/5202). The organization has an annual publication, "Oportunidades de Estudio en Las Instituciones de Educación Superior de Venezuela," which is useful.

Universidad Central de Venezuela (UCV)

This is the city's largest public university, with more than 50,000 students enrolled in the schools of medicine, law, engineering, sciences and social sciences, all located in Los Chaguaramos (Tel.: 61.9811-9830). The departments of veterinary medicine and agriculture are at the branch campus in Maracay (Tel.: 28.996), and there is an additional engineering campus in Cagua (Tel.: (044) 71.505).

Universidad Nacional Abierta (UNA)

Based on the Open University system used in England, the main administrative offices of this university are at Avda. Gamboa No. 18, San Bernardino (Tel.: 574.3690/1322, 576.5522). There are many branches throughout the country.

VACACIONES
INOLVIDABLES

Las veinticuatro horas del día, los siete días de la semana, los 365 días del año, American Express® está a su servicio para asegurar que sus vacaciones sean todo lo que usted soñó.

Si su avión se retarda, American Express puede asegurarle que su habitación del hotel estará esperándole.

Si descubre algún tesoro que desea poseer, lléveselo a casa. American Express no tiene límite pre-establecido de gastos.

Si usted adquiere los pasajes con La Tarjeta, automáticamente obtendrá un amplio seguro.

Si necesita información de cualquier tipo, profesionales de American Express están dispuestos a ayudarle en más de 1.000 ciudades alrededor del mundo.

Si La Tarjeta, o su dinero se pierden, American Express puede re-equiparlo en 24 horas.

Si se encuentra en los Estados Unidos, personal calificado está dispuesto a atender su llamada (Hot Line) para cualquier tipo de consulta.

Si usted o los suyos necesitan asistencia médica o legal, American Express pone a su disposición la ayuda necesaria en cualquier lugar del mundo, a través de Global Assist.

Porque usted es Miembro, nada de lo que hagamos hoy es tan importante como lo que hagamos por usted.

LAS EXPERIENCIAS
INOLVIDABLES
COMIENZAN CON
AMERICAN EXPRESS

Nunca salga sin ella.®

BANCO CONSOLIDADO
siempre a su lado

Universidad Simón Bólivar (USB)

This highly-rated university is in Valle de Sartenejas, Los Guayabitos, Baruta (Tel.: 93.4301/8322, 963.3022). It offers a wide range of programs in the sciences, engineering and urban planning. Tourism and other three-year technical programs are offered at the branch campus on the coast at Valle Camurí Grande, Naiguata (Tel.: (031) 72.2911-2919).

Universidad Simón Rodríguez (USR)

With a number of branches throughout the city, the administrative offices of this university are at Edif. Torre de Colegio, Pisos 6 y 7, Avda. José María Vargas, Santa Fé Norte (Tel.: 979.1022/1855). The public information office is located at Calle 14, Los Jardines de El Valle, El Valle (Tel.: 681.7310/1668).

The largest private universities in Caracas are:

Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (UCAB)

Avda. Intercomunal, Montalbán, La Vega. (Tel.: 442.9511/5220). There is also a Los Teques Campus (Tel.: (032) 42.264).

Universidad Metropolitana (UNIMET)

Distribuidor Autopista Guarenas, La Urbina (Tel.: 241.5174/4833).

Universidad Santa María (USM)

Vía Petare-Santa Lucía, Sector La Florencia (Tel.: 291.2524/2726/2727). The information office is at: Avda. Páez, Plaza Madariaga, El Paraíso (Tel.: 483.5133/2414).

U.S.-BASED STUDY PROGRAMS

Three U.S.-based programs with branches in Caracas meet at the campus of Colegio Internacional de Caracas, Calle Colegio Americano, Encima de Los Samanes:

Shelton State Community College, with the main campus in Tuscaloosa, Ala., offers classes leading to Associate of Art, Associate of Business Administration and Associate of Science degrees.

The University of Alabama offers intensive graduate courses in education four times a year. The complete series leads to a Master's in Education and can be applied toward a Ph.D. that is completed with six months residential study at the main campus.

Auburn University, with the main campus in Auburn, Ala., offers an MBA program via correspondence and video tape. Classes are expected to begin in fall 1993.

Further information can be obtained from Barbara Hauser at 93.0444.

OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The largest teachers' training institution in Caracas is the Instituto Pedagógico de Caracas, Avda. Páez, El Paraiso (Tel.: 481.7404, 461.6036), which is a branch of the Universidad Pedagógica Experimental Libertador (UPEL) Edif. El Tamarindo, Piso 5 Oficina 5-1, Estación Pérez Bonalde, Catia (Tel.: 872.1311/1690).

Other institutions of special interest include the Instituto de Estudios Superiores en Administración (IESA), at Avda. IESA, San Bernardino (Tel.: 51.8708, 51.4419). This institute offers an MBA program as well as continuing education courses in business at the graduate level.

Graduate studies in 10 fields are offered at the Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones

Científicas (IVIC). Located at Altos de Pipe, Km. 11, Carretera Panamericana, just before reaching San Antonio de los Altos (Tel.: 501.1111), the IVIC is also the location of a number of specialized research centers funded by various international bodies and has the best scientific research library in the country. The libraries at both IESA and IVIC are open to the public. **(For more information see "Libraries," page 255.)**

The Centro Medico Docente La Trinidad offers frequent short courses and symposia/workshops on medical subjects, as well as general-interest classes such as first aid for parents. Further information is available at 93.3656/3122, Ext. 6249.

HIGHER EDUCATION OUTSIDE CARACAS

MARACAIBO

Universidad de la Tercera Edad

This university's program is geared toward mature adults, with a minimum age of 50 required to enter. Programs in social sciences, business administration, etc. are offered at Calle 73, No. 4-70 (Tel.: 82.422/421/420).

Universidad de Zulia (Luz)

This public university has a full range of programs, including medicine, law, and post-graduate studies in other disciplines. It is located at Avda. Universidad (Calle 16), between Avda. 16 and 22 (Tel.: 52.9253).

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

CENTER OF LEARNING - On campus at the Universidad de Simón Bolívar, one of the country's higher-learning institutes.

Universidad Rafael Urdaneta

This is a well-respected private university at Sector La Retirada, Avda. Principal La Rinconada, northwest of the Maracaibo Country Club (Tel.: 92.2655/2693). The university offers a full five-year program in a wide range of courses from business administration to marine science. Law and medical studies are not offered.

VALENCIA

Instituto Universitario Tecnológico de Seguridad Industrial (IUTSI)

Highly specialized programs in training for professional careers in fire protection and industrial safety are offered here, at Via San Diego, about five minutes east of Big Low Center, on the north side of the highway (Tel: 37.7472).

Universidad de Carabobo

The main campus is in Bárbula on Avda. Universidad in Naguanagua, at the northern edge of the city (Tel.: 57.3293). A full range of courses is offered, including law, medicine and a postgraduate program in a variety of other disciplines.

Universidad de la Tercera Edad (UTE)

Programs exclusively for mature students are offered here, with a minimum age of 40 years for admission. Courses are aimed at elevating cultural, professional and social levels of the adult population, with degrees in administration, philosophy, agrotechnology, parapsychology and social communication. The university is on the grounds of Fundación Cipriano Jiménez Macias, Calle 130, No. 107-211, Prebo (Tel.: 22.07082/3092).

Universidad Nacional Abierta

There is a full five-year program in areas such as business and public administration, pre-school education and accounting. The university is on Avda. Monseñor Adam at Avda. Andrés Eloy Blanco, El Viñedo (Tel.: 22.5825/5915).

Universidad Tecnológico de Centro (UNITEC)

This technical university is at Via Araguito, 2 km. from the Carratera Nacional in Guacara (Tel.: (045) 71.8232/8251). It is aimed at preparing people for careers catering to companies in the Valencia/Guacara industrial zones, with courses in specialties such as metalworking.

RELIGIOUS FACILTIES

IN CARACAS

Asociación Israelita de Venezuela
Avda. Principal de Maripérez
Los Caobos
Tel.: 574.5397/3953/4975, 576.4572
Rabbi: Isaac Cohen
Services: 6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
8:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. (Saturday)
7:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. (Sunday)
Services in Spanish and Hebrew.

Baha'i Faith
Avda. Tuy, No. 32-12
Colinas de Bello Monte
Tel.: 751.7669, 963.6908 (English)
Services: Sunday at 10:30 a.m., and prayers, readings and discussions. This is the national headquarters for the Baha'i Faith, which has groups in Valencia, Maracaibo and Barquisimeto.

Bethel Baptist Church
Quinta Loma Linda
Calle El Paseo y Calle La Loma
Lomas del Club Hípico
Tel.: 978.1748, 77.2176
Pastor: Tommy L. Berry
Services: Bible study at 7:30 p.m. (Wednesday)
Women's Bible study at 9:00 a.m. (Thursday)
Sunday school at 10:00 a.m. (Sunday)
Coffee fellowship at 11:00 a.m. (Sunday)
English worship service at 11:30 a.m. (Sunday)
Affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Brethren in Christ World Mission
Centro Evangélico Pentecostal
Quinta Lydia
Avda. Montevideo
Los Caobos
Tel.: 574.7615
Pastors: Martha and Tim Giles
Services: Spanish at 7:30 p.m. (Monday, Tuesday, Friday)
English at 4:00 p.m. (Thursday, Saturday)
Adult/child Sunday school at 10:00 a.m. (Sunday)
English worship at 11:30 a.m. (Sunday)
Spanish worship at 7:00 p.m. (Sunday)

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

HEAVENS ABOVE - The cathedral, dedicated to Nuestra Señora de Las Nieves, graces the sky in Ciudad Bolívar.

Christian and Missionary Alliance
Tel.: 987.9686
Pastors: Harold and Becky Priebe

Christian Church (Team Expansion)
Edif. Zenit, PH
Sector Gran Café
En frente de Banco Provincial
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 762.9505-9507
Fax: 762.6177

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
2da. Calle de Caurimare
En frente del Centro Comerical Caurimare
Tel.: Being connected

Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society
International Baptist Church
El Marqués
Tel.: 242.0226
Pastors: Jeff and Christine Denlinger
(Tel.: 241.0889)

El Salvador Lutheran Church
Avda. Tocuyo
Colinas de Bello Monte
Tel.: 751.1468
Pastor: Mike Wakeland
(Tel.: 661.7322)
Services: English at 8:30 a.m. (Sunday)
Sunday school, adult Bible class in English at 9:45 a.m. (Sunday)
Spanish at 11:00 a.m. (Sunday)

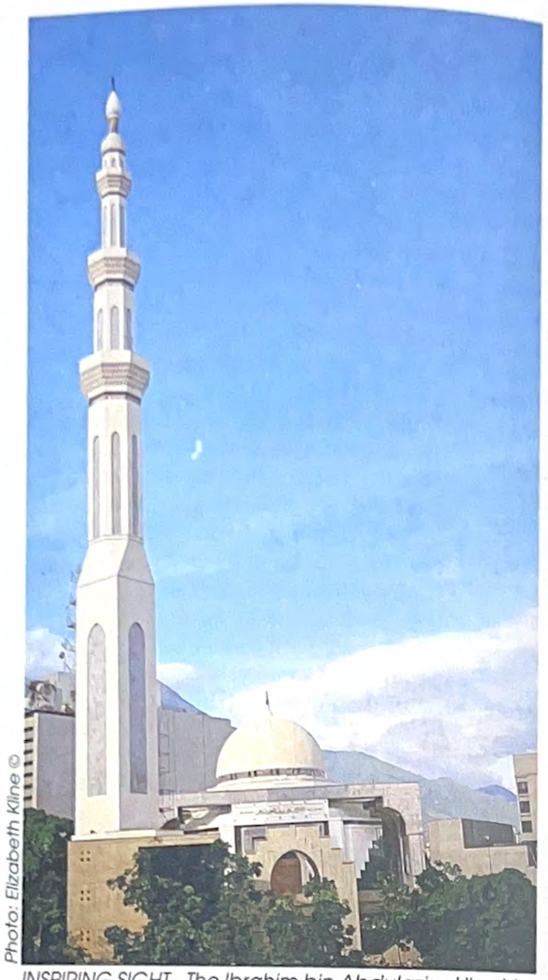


Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

INSPIRING SIGHT - The Ibrahim bin Abdulazis al Ibrahim Mosque was expected to open in late 1993.

Evangelical Free Church of America
Edif. Easo, Piso 1, Oficina L
Avda. Francisco de Miranda con José Martí
Chacaíto
Tel.: 951.5051/4918/6070
Fax: 951.7364

Evangelical Mennonite Church
Edif. Don Vicente, Local 3
Calle Principal de La Urbina
La Urbina
Tel.: 241.5142

Fellowship Baptist (Canadian)
Field Director: Bevin Wray
Tel. and fax: 963.1627

First Church of Christ, Scientist
Edif. Sinclair, Apt. 11-12, Piso 1
Avda. Libertador
En frente del Centro Comercial Los Cedros
La Florida
Services: Spanish at 10:00 a.m. (Sunday)
Testimonials at 5:30 p.m. (Wednesday)
The Reading Room is open Monday through Friday from 3:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m., except Wednesday, when it opens from 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Ibrahim bin Abdulazis al Ibrahim Mosque
Avda. Libertador y Quebrada Honda
Expected to open in late 1993.

Iglesia Cristiana Centro Plaza (Christian Church)
Teatro Rafael Guinand
Centro Comercial Centro Plaza
Tel.: 762.9505/9506
Services: Sunday at 9:30 a.m., adult Sunday school in English followed by service in Spanish.

Iglesia Evangélica Luterana "La Resurrección"
Prolongación Avda. 4 con 3ra. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 264.1868; 263.8839 (German Congregación San Miguel)
263.7908 (Hungarian Congregación San Juan Evangelista)
32.9694 (Latvian Congregación Letona)
33.5201 (Spanish Congregación La Reforma)
31.6820 (Scandinavian Congregación Escandinava)

Services: Hungarian at 9:00 a.m. (Sundays)
Spanish at 10:30 a.m. (Sundays)
German at 10:30 a.m. (Last Sunday of month)

Misión Católica de Habla Alemana
Calle Juan Iturbe (Sur)
Sorocaima, La Trinidad
Tel.: 93.4842/4942/4464
Services: German at 9:30 a.m. (Sundays)

Or Shalom Synagogue
Hogar B'nai B'rith
9na. Transversal entre 7ma. Avda. y Avda. Luis Roche
Altamira
Tel.: 34.4391, 35.8794
Fax: 35.8794
Rabbi: Samuel Vainberg
Services: Conservative Shabbat services in Spanish and Hebrew at 7:00 p.m. (Friday)

Reformed Church in America
Bob and Helen Wierenger
Tel.: 987.4728

St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral
Anglican - Episcopal
Plaza Urape
San Román
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.4727
Pastor: Peter White
Services: Holy Communion,
English at 8:30 a.m. (Sunday)
Church school, service, English at 10:00 a.m. (Sunday)
Spanish at 6:00 p.m. (Sunday)
Coffee hour follows all 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. services. Church activities include Bible study, prayer and a women's group.

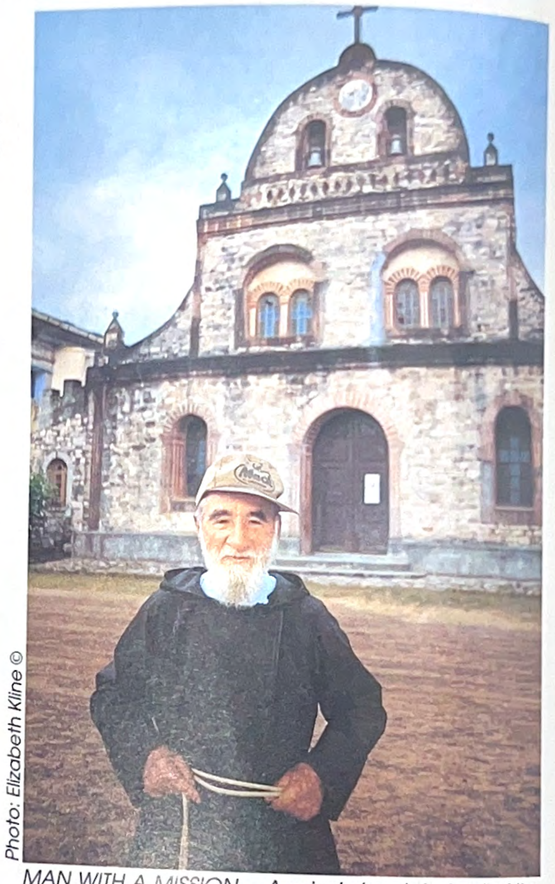


Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

MAN WITH A MISSION - A priest stands in front of the mission church in Kavanayen in La Gran Sabana.

St. Thomas More Catholic Church
Chapel de Colegio San Ignacio
Entrada en Calle Santa Teresa de Jesús
La Castellana
Tel.: 285.5994
Pastor: Ignatius Battaglia, pastor
Services: Confessions at 8:45 a.m. (Sundays)
Mass, English at 9:15 a.m. (Sundays)
Social hour and classes for children are held immediately after Sunday Mass. A women's Bible study group meets Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.

Sociedad Luterana de Evangelización en Venezuela (Lutheran Mission Board)
Quinta Lutero
Avda. Caurimare
Colinas de Bello Monte
Tel.: 752.6031/4683
Pastor: Donald Ellcey

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board
Quinta Luisa
La Trinidad
Tel.: 93.3921, 941.2316
Directors: John Murphy and Richard Beal
Services: Spanish at 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Sunday)
Children's classes are available in English. About half of the congregation speaks English.

The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM)
Edif. Sorocaima, Mezz. 1
Calle Mohedano
Chacao
Tel.: 264.1785, 284.1268

Unión Israelita de Caracas
Avda. Marqués del Toro No. 9
San Bernardino
Tel.: 52.8222, 51.5253/5235
Rabbi: Pynchas Brenner
Services: 6:45 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
Spanish and Hebrew at 6:45 a.m., 9:00 a.m., and 6:30 p.m. (Saturdays and Jewish holidays)

United Christian Church (Interdenominational)
Avda. La Arboleda
El Bosque
Tel.: 761.3901 (Spanish), 751.6438 (English, pastor's home)

Fax: 761.3902
Pastor: Ward Williams
Services: 10:00 a.m. (Sunday)
Children leave church for classes at 10:20 a.m. Nursery for infants and toddlers provided. English-language books and video tapes available to members and friends during coffee hour, which follows the Sunday service. A pot-luck lunch is held the second Sunday of each month at 11:30 a.m.

Yeshiva Gedola of Venezuela (Lubavitch)
Yeshiva Gedola of Venezuela
Quinta Lore
Avda. Jorge Washington
San Bernardino
Tel.: 51.4167, 52.2184
Rabbi: Moisés Perman
Services: 6:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., 6:45 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
6:00 p.m. (Friday and holiday services)
10:00 a.m. (Saturday and holiday services)
Torah lessons in Spanish, Hebrew and English available, as well as kosher meals.

Lubavitch Branch Altamira
Quinta Mi Reina
Avda. 12 entre 7ma. y 8ma. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 263.9669, 283.3129
Rabbi: Aryeh Friedman
Services: 6:30 a.m. (Monday and Thursday)
6:00 p.m. (Friday)
9:15 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. (Saturday)
Evening classes for adults:
8:00 p.m. (Sunday)
6:45 p.m. (Monday)
6:30 p.m. (Tuesday)

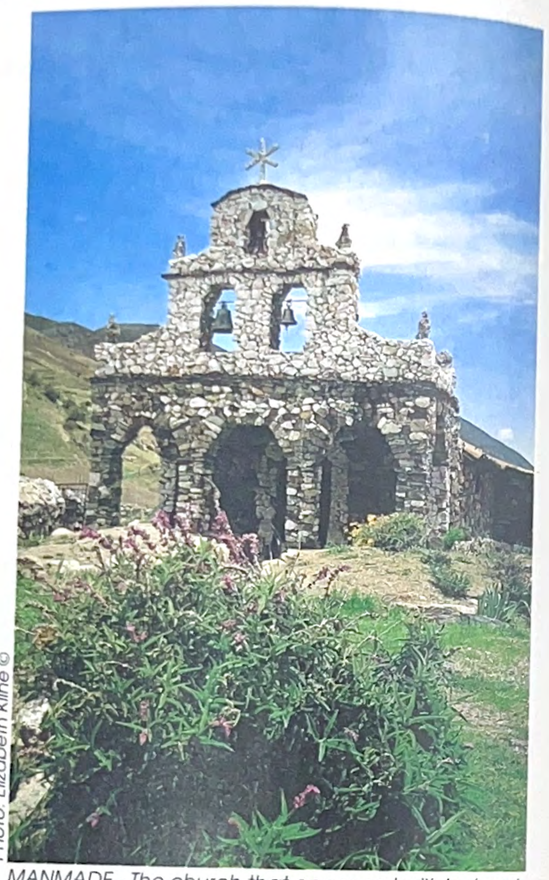


Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©
MANMADE - The church that one man built, by hand, in San Rafael de Mucuchies in Mérida State.

OUTSIDE CARACAS

Information on Roman Catholic Masses in English outside Caracas can be obtained from St. Thomas More Catholic Church (Tel.: 285.5994).
Information on the Jewish community activities outside Caracas can be obtained from the Unión Israelita de Caracas (Tel.: 52.8222, 51.5253).

MARACAIBO

Baha'i Faith
Avda. 21A, No. 65-31
Sector Paraíso
Tel.: 51.2821
Services: 5:00 p.m. (First and second Sundays)

Christ Church (Interdenominational)
Calle 74 y Avda. 8
Santa Rita
Tel.: 77.548
Interim Pastor: Gary Bush
Services: 9:00 a.m. (Sunday)
Sunday school for children is held at 10:00 a.m. Sundays and Holy Communion is given on the first Sunday of every month. Nursery services provided.

Church of Nuestra Señora de Coromoto
Calle 73, No. 65-175
Los Olivos
Tel.: 54.0959
Pastor: John Mark Coffee
Services: English at 9:30 a.m. (Sunday)

Faith Baptist Church
Avda. 36 y Calle 67
Al lado de Costa Verde
Tel.: 80.857
Pastor: Ramon Chacón (91.5075)
Services: 10:00 a.m. (Sunday)
6:30 p.m. (Sunday)
Sunday school at 9:00 a.m. (Sunday)

Sociedad Israelita de Maracaibo Synagogue
Avda. 13, Calle 74
Tel.: 74.208, 70.333
Rabbi: Amran Carciente
Services in Hebrew; Spanish and English spoken.

MARACAY

Maracay Community Church
Avda. Principal de La Pedrera, No. 142
Tel.: 83.1302/9437
Pastor: Ernest S. Frens (Tel.: 577.0716)
Services: English at 11:00 a.m. (Sunday)
Bible lessons are offered for young people during the service; communion is held the third Sunday of the month; coffee hour follows each service. A women's Bible study class is held Thursday afternoons.

PUERTO ORDAZ

Puerto Ordaz Community Church (Interdenominational)
Campo B
Carrera Buenos Aires
Entre Calle Lima y Perú
Tel.: 22.8948
Pastor: Keith L. Plank
Services: English at 8:50 a.m. (Sunday)
Child care and Sunday school for children. A coffee hour is held after each service. The library is open Sunday from 10:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. and Wednesday from 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

VALENCIA

Baha'i Faith
Casa Río 80
Al lado del Edif. Caribe
Avda. San José de Tarbes, entre la Autopista y Avda. Bolívar
Tel.: 21.1755, 22.6772
Pastor: Diane Taefy
Weekly meetings for prayers, readings, study classes and children's classes.

The Valencia Community Church
Avda. 139 San José de Tarbes
Entre la Autopista y Avda. Bolívar en los Colegio La Esperanza
Pastor: David S. Topazian (Tel.: 22.1040)
Services: 8:30 a.m. (Sunday)
Nursery services provided during services. A dinner and discussion group is held Sunday at 7:30 p.m. and a women's Bible group is held at 9:30 am., Sundays. Catechism classes are held on Tuesday at 2:40 p.m. at Colegio Internacional de Carabobo. Communion is provided on the second Sunday of each month.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

A wide variety of community organizations, including service, education and special activity groups, can be found in most cities in Venezuela.

Many English-language and bi-lingual groups announce their meetings and other activities via The Daily Journal's Community Calendar, which is published daily. A full list of community groups is usually published on Sundays.

Many service clubs, student exchange programs, university and college associations and fraternal organizations also have chapters in Venezuela.

ORGANIZATIONS IN CARACAS

Acude (Asociacíon Cultural Para el Desarollo)
Acude is dedicated to promoting basic education to help develop Venezuela's human resources. A non-profit organization, it provides training for volunteer educational promoters, publishes educational materials and sponsors television and radio shows.
Torre California, Piso 11
Avda. San Francisco y Avda. Rio de Janeiro
Macaracuay
Tel.: 257.2336/8853/0656
Fax: 257.9355

Aglow
The Women's Aglow Fellowship is an international organization of Christian women from all backgrounds. It offers weekly Bible study and support groups, and provides a variety of Christian music and literature.

A fellowship breakfast featuring local and international speakers is held in Caracas on the last Tuesday of each month at Quinta La Piragua, Calle Madrid (behind Pizza Hut), Las Mercedes at 9:30 a.m., where one can obtain information on chapters in other cities.
Tel.: 77.4585 Mercedes Gómez, President
22.4273 Neria Abreu (for English speakers)

Alcoholics Anonymous
Alcoholics Anonymous is open to anyone who has a drinking problem. Meetings are held in English in Caracas on Tuesday and Thursday at 7:00 p.m. in the United Christian Church, Avda. La Arboleda, El Bosque (Tel.: 71.3901). Meetings in Spanish are held at a number of locations in the city.

More information can be obtained from the General Service Office of the Venezuelan chapter of AA (Tel.: 752.6914 or 751.8101).

Al-Anon is for family members, business associates and friends of alcoholics who wish to find out more about alcoholism and how to deal with the problems and conflicts caused by their association with alcoholics. In Caracas, meetings are held in English on Wednesdays from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Iglesia La Ascención del Señor, Avda. Peninsula de Paraguaná, Cumbres de Curumo. They are held in German on Tuesdays from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the German church, Congregación San Miguel, Prolongación Avda. Altamira (Tel.: 263.8839/9395.) For assistance in Spanish, volunteers staff the Al-Anon office at 34.2716.

Asociación de Damas Suizas

This is a social group for women of Swiss nationality, or whose husbands are Swiss citizens. Get-togethers are held the second Wednesday of every month to allow members to meet socially and to plan such annual fund-raising projects as the November Bazaar Suizo, where Swiss products are sold to the public. The proceeds of these activities are donated in equipment and scholarships to several charities.

Quinta Elena, Transversal 4
Los Chorros
Tel.: 74.4758

Asociación Holandesa de Venezuela (AHV)

AHV welcomes all nationals and friends of Holland. Regular activities of the group include hockey, football, bridge, coffee mornings and a monthly get-together.

Dutch Embassy
Edif. Banaven, Torre B, Piso 2
Chuao
Tel.: 263.3622

Asociación Venezolana de Amigos del Reino Unido (AVAREU)

Founded in 1989 by a group of Venezuelan scholars who wanted to maintain ties with Great Britain after completing post-graduate work at British universities, AVAREU is a non-profit institution aimed at providing British-Venezuelan cultural exchanges.

Activities include English conversation circles, pub evenings, lectures, workshops, excursions out of Caracas, exhibitions, and monthly get-togethers.

Information on upcoming events can be obtained from the British Council (Tel.: 91.5222, or fax: 91.5943.)

Asociación Venezolana de Prevención de la Crueldad (AVEPREC)

AVEPREC is a non-profit organization that fights against cruelty to animals. Volunteers are urged to assist in the group's campaign to promote good conditions for animals.

Apto. 63461
Caracas 1067-A
Tel.: 752.8658, 952.8753

Asociación Venezolana para el Sindrome de Down (AVESID)

This is a non-profit organization founded in 1992 by parents of people suffering from Down's syndrome. The association, advised by a group of foreign and Venezuelan professionals, provides technical information, advice and emotional support for victims and their families.

Apto. 4875
Carmelitas
Tel.: 261.2881
Fax: 263.529

Audubon Society (Sociedad Conservacionista Audubon de Venezuela)

The Venezuelan chapter of the Audubon Society is an active, multilingual group of conservation-minded citizens whose interest is to learn more about the environment and to focus attention on the need to protect Venezuela's natural resources and wildlife. The

chapter works with foreign and national ecological groups on a number of projects designed to preserve Venezuela's forest lands and other ecologically threatened regions.

Members receive a monthly newsletter providing information on activities such as ongoing research projects, field trips, lectures, films and workshops and are allowed access to the group's Las Mercedes research library. The public is invited to attend the monthly lectures held in the Ateneo de Chuao and to browse through the bookshop. The Audubon Society can issue permits required to visit national parks and provides travel advice for those who want to venture off the beaten track.

Centro Comercial Paseo Las Mercedes
La Cuadra Section
(Between door to parking lot and stairway to public restrooms)
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 993.2525
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

B'nai B'rith

The B'nai B'rith sponsors a number of cultural and charitable activities, including conferences and seminars, and maintains an active human rights office. There are regular meetings on Saturday at 3:30 p.m. for university-aged people, and a camp for young people aged 9 to 18 every August at different locations in the country.

Hogar B'nai B'rith
9na. Transversal entre 7ma. Avda. y Avda. Luis Roche
Altamira
Tel.: 262.1346
Fax: 261.4083

Boy and Cub Scouts

The Cub Scouts, for boys in grades 2 through 5, hold regular meetings at The British School, Colegio Internacional de Caracas, Escuela Campo Alegre and Washington Academy. Boy Scout troops, for boys aged 11 to 18, meet weekly on Wednesday from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Escuela Campo Alegre, and at St. Mary's Church, San Román.

Cub Scout and Boy Scout registration takes place at Escuela Campo Alegre in the morning of the first Saturday in September for all except the British School Cub Scout pack, whose registration is held later.

Most Cubs complete the Arrow of Light requirements (the highest award in Cub Scouts). The troops consistently produce a higher percentage of Eagle Scouts (the highest rank awarded in Boy Scouts) than do most troops in the United States.

The troops have very active hiking and outdoor programs, and new members should bring camping gear whenever possible. Tents are not necessary but are helpful; summer-weight sleeping bags are a must. No uniforms should be brought from abroad, since the scouts wear the Venezuelan Scout uniform.

In the past, there have been groups in Maracaibo, Valencia and Puerto Ordaz, but with the reduction of the English-speaking community over the last few years, these have disappeared. Local contact: Tom Flores (Tel.: 976.1095)

British Council

The British Council aims to promote goodwill and to develop cultural relations between the people of the United Kingdom and those of other countries of the world.

In Caracas, it runs an English Literature and Language Teaching Information Center (ELLTIS), with a magazine-lending library. English is taught to prepare students for internationally-recognized British examinations.

Information on Britain is available from the ELLTIS reference collection, and from the British Education and Exchanges Information Service (BEXIS), which collects data on British teaching centers at all levels from primary school to postdoctorate research.

Educational and research links between Venezuelan and British institutions are promoted by the British Council through a variety of schemes.

The British Council's cultural program is mainly carried out in cooperation with the Ateneo, the universities, and the municipal art departments throughout Venezuela. It includes the presentation of works by British artists and the promotion of performances by Venezuelan groups.

Torre La Noria, Piso 6
Paseo Enrique Eraso, Las Mercedes
(entrada de San Román)
Tel.: 91.5222
Fax: 91.5943

British Ladies' Society

A purely social organization, the British Ladies' Society is open to all women of British nationality or those whose husbands are U.K. citizens. There is a varied program of activities, including coffee at 9:30 a.m. on the second Monday of the month at Iglesia La Santisima Trinidad, Calle Iglesia (at the end of Avda. Principal) in Prados del Este. Many events are planned each year, including children's parties, field trips, lectures, and luncheons.

Canadian Ladies' Association

All ladies of Canadian nationality or whose husbands are Canadian citizens are eligible to attend this social organization for monthly get-togethers, luncheons, shopping, and/or cultural excursions. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month.
For information, contact the Canadian Embassy (Tel.: 951.6666/6174).

Caracas Accueil

Newcomers to Caracas who are French-speaking can share conversation in their native tongue and get to know the city and its offerings in this casual group. The group's president is Daniele Seurin (Tel.: 32.2373).

Caracas Hash House Harriers

This social group of runners meets twice a month to follow a five-to-eight kilometer trail through a Caracas neighborhood. For more information, call David Punchard (Tel.: 751.5542).

Caracas Playhouse

An English-language amateur theater society, the Caracas Playhouse takes pride in producing and presenting plays for the enjoyment of English-speaking audiences in Caracas.

Newcomers are urged to go to tryouts and rehearsals or help with off-stage duties. Previous theater experience is not necessary. For more information, contact Francine Jacome (Tel.: 661.9606).

Caraquáticos

An English-speaking skin-diving and scuba-diving club, Caraquáticos meets every second Tuesday to organize one-day group trips and weekend excursions to Venezuela's coast and islands. Members (preferably not spearfishers) participate in diving sports and discover the beauties of marine life in the Caribbean. For more information, contact Allen Haldin (Tel.: 294.1132) or John Watkins (Tel.: 986.5939).

Centro Excursionsta de Caracas

Hiking and mountain climbing trips throughout Venezuela are arranged by the Centro Excursionista de Caracas. One- or two-day excursions are usually organized every weekend, with longer excursions planned to take advantage of vacation periods. Excursions are normally divided into categories for beginners, intermediates and advanced hikers, each with an experienced leader. An outing schedule is published each month and is available either by calling the group president, or at the Saturday meetings, held at the San Román headquarters from 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Club meetings are held in Spanish but there are a sufficient number of English speakers present to allow non-Spanish speakers to communicate.
Calle Chivacoa, esquina Calle Yare
Parcelamiento del Zona Verde
San Román
President: Enrique Herrera
Tel.: 292.3747

Centro Venezolano-Americano

The Centro Venezolano-Americano (CVA) was the first private, non-profit institution in Venezuela to promote cultural interchange between the United States and Venezuela.

The CVA offers intensive language programs in English and Spanish, as well as a variety of cultural programs, such as art exhibits, concerts, seminars and lectures, and publications about Venezuelan historical figures. Its staff of more than 100 teachers handles an average of 3,000 students at a time for language instruction. Its internship program encourages recent graduates from U.S. universities to gain experience teaching English as a foreign language at the CVA, while learning Spanish from native speakers, meeting Venezuelans, exploring local customs and earning a modest stipend.

The CVA has a bilingual library open to the general public Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 751.5511, 752.7522
Fax: 751.5279

Children's Service League

This service organization is dedicated to raising money for underprivileged and handicapped children, as well as visiting hospitalized children. All women of Caracas are welcome to join. There are minimal dues, but membership is a matter of participation.

Activities include fund-raising events such as raffles, benefits, annual Mother's Day and Christmas bazaars, and regular sales of greeting cards, baked goods, hand-sewn craft items and flowers. Members also work in hospitals and provide secretarial duties in the CSL office. Arts and craft and flower workshops are held Tuesday mornings. The CSL bookshop sells used hardback and paperback books at bargain prices.

Quinta Jocary
Avda. Cristóbal Colón
La Trinidad
Tel.: 93.9923
Hours: 9:00 a.m - 1:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Saturday)

Damas de Hatikvah

This English-speaking group of Jewish and non-Jewish women works to help poor and underprivileged people in Venezuelan hospitals and institutions by donating needed equipment and machinery. Social and cultural activities are organized each year, together with annual fund-raising projects such as the publication of the magazine "Esperanza" and the holding of a Mother's Day Tea. Meetings are held once a month, at various times and locations. For more information, call the offices (Tel.: 51.2527, 77.1622, 979.0527).

Federación Venezolana de Bridge

The FVB is the official bridge body in Venezuela, and conducts national and official championships. Offices of the FVB are on the premises of the Centro de Bridge de Caracas, a private bridge club. Competitive bridge games are offered almost every day of the week either at the Centro, or at other locations in Caracas. Members of the FVB are included in the national bridge ranking, receiving points for top performances in federation and affiliated games. Members receive a bulletin published periodically by the federation.

Centro de Bridge de Caracas
Quinta Ekeko (al lado de la Clínica Sanatrix)
2da. Calle de Campo Alegre
Tel.: 262.1160

Friends of the Irish Priests of Propatria

Volunteers can assist in the ongoing work of the Irish missionaries of the Society of the Sacred Heart in the barrios of Propatria. In the past, volunteers have raised money to provide a jeep for the priests' use. For more information, contact Father John McCarthy and Father Thomas O'Brian (Tel.: 84.1296).

Girl Scouts and Brownies

These troops meet at Escuela Campo Alegre, the British School, LEAP, and Colegio Internacional de Caracas. Girls do not need to be registered at one of these schools to join, but they must be able to read and speak English. For more information, the individual schools should be contacted.

Brownies (6-, 7-, and 8-year-olds) and Juniors (9-, 10-, and 11-year olds) meet after school. Cadettes (12-, 13-, and 14-year olds) and Seniors (15-, 16-, and 17-year olds) meet after school or on Saturdays. All troops follow the U.S. program for merit badges and advancement.

Girl Scout registration takes place at Escuela Campo Alegre in the morning of the first Saturday in September for all except the British School troop, whose registration is held later. Troops meet regularly beginning at the end of September.

In addition to the many projects that are part of the U.S. badge-earning program, the guides and Brownies also camp outdoors. At Campo Curapo, near Guarenas, for example, the girls sleep on cots in the campsite buildings and prepare their own cookout meals over open fires.

Lions Club

There are a number of active Lions and Leo clubs in the Caracas area, as well as in other cities in Venezuela, including Maracay. There is no English-language club, but most groups have enough members who speak English so that a visiting Lion or Leo is made to feel at home immediately.

Lions Club
Apto. 61019
Caracas 1060 - A
Tel.: 662.3339

Newcomers

The Newcomers Club of Caracas aims to help new arrivals find friendship, obtain information, and develop a positive attitude to face the challenges and rewards of life in Venezuela.

Membership is open to all residents, as well as newcomers, since the organization has found that in a city of the size and complexity of Caracas, everyone is a newcomer to something, sometime. Briefings are given on many aspects of Caracas life, including such facets as where and how to buy meat, use a *por puesto*, find medical help and survive culture shock.

The Newcomers Club meets the fourth Wednesday of every month except for June and July. A summer picnic is held in early July. The gatherings are informational and social, beginning at 9:30 a.m. and ending by noon. Help with child care is available.

The club also sponsors day trips and evening events and neighborhood groups arrange coffee mornings, luncheons and evening get-togethers. For more information, contact Wanda Baptista (Tel.: 751.0726).

Overeaters Anonymous

Meetings of this fellowship of compulsive overeaters who gather to recover from food addiction are held Tuesday from 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. at St. Mary's Church, San Román (Tel.: 91.4727).

Resurrexit

Resurrexit is an interdenominational, volunteer AIDS education and support organization.
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
9:00 a.m. - noon (Saturday)
Tel.: 91.0774/1070

Rotary Club

Caracas has a number of active Rotary Club chapters in the metropolitan area and in other cities throughout the country. The Rotary Club is involved in aiding the community in a variety of ways, with an emphasis on helping young people help themselves to a better future. Members' projects also assist the elderly and handicapped. Among the activities Rotary supports are scholarships and assistance for studies abroad, and an international exchange program.

In Caracas, an annual Friendship Dinner and cultural events such as public concerts are held to raise money for the community's needy.

Weekly Rotary luncheons for the Chacao Chapter, featuring speakers on current issues, are held Thursday at 12:30 p.m. at the Hotel Tamanaco Inter-Continental. Visiting Rotary members from other countries are welcome. Newcomers who wish to join must be sponsored by a local Rotary member.

Chacao Chapter
Local 36-A, Hotel Tamanaco Inter-Continental
Tel.: 208.7195, 92.2680

Self-Help Cancer Group

Organized by Dorthee Reuter de Kovacs, a strong-willed cancer survivor, this group meets Wednesday at 6:00 p.m., by appointment. The objective is to offer aid and support for cancer patients and their caretakers. Through counseling and different therapies, alternative ways to alter the body, mind and soul are taught to help victims restore their emotional and physical health.

St. Mary's Church
Plaza Urape
San Román
Tel.: 91.4727

St. Mary's Play Group

This English-speaking group for mothers and children meets twice a week from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., Mondays and Thursdays.

St. Mary's Church
Plaza Urape
San Román
Tel.: 91.4727

Sweet Adelines/Caracas Harmony Chorus

Sweet Adelines is an international vocal organization for women dedicated to teaching members four-part barbershop harmony without musical accompaniment.

Women of all ages are invited to join the chorus and attend the practices, held Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Iglesia La Santísima Trinidad, Prados del Este. No prior musical training or experience is necessary. For more information, contact the group's director, Judy Kese (Tel.: 978.3626).

United States Navy League

The United States Navy League is a civilian group that supports and provides information on the U.S. Navy, Maritime and Marine organizations. Membership is open to any interested

U.S. citizen not on active duty. Annual dues of $30 are paid to Washington headquarters and dues of Bs.1,500 ($16.48) are paid to the local Caracas Council. Lifetime memberships are also available for $325.

Luncheon meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month. Guest speakers are invited to address members on a wide range of economic and political subjects. For more information, contact the group's president, Garib Dow (Tel.: 284.5516).

VAAUW (Venezuelan Association of American University Women)

This volunteer organization, open to women of all nationalities who have completed at least two years of university study, is dedicated to the promotion of educational, cultural and social activities in the community.

The VAAUW headquarters in Altamira house a thrift shop, whose proceeds fund such VAAUW programs as a day school for underprivileged children. VAAUW also offers university scholarships for Venezuelan women in need of financial aid.

Every October and January, registration is open to the entire community for VAAUW-sponsored study groups from auto mechanics and yoga to Venezuelan flora.

VAAUW social meetings, held monthly at various locations, include a cultural program.

Quinta VAAUW
Transversal 6 y Avda. Luis Roche
Altamira
Tel.: 263.8820

Venezuelan-American Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VenAmCham)

The Venezuelan-American Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VenAmCham) is a non-profit, self-financed, independent business organization founded to promote its member companies' business interests and the expansion of U.S.-Venezuelan trade. It is one of the largest chambers in Venezuela, with some 3,700 members representing 950 member companies.

Chamber membership is open to all American companies and Venezuelan firms that have direct or indirect relations with the United States.

As part of its program to disseminate information to member companies, VenAmCham publishes an award-winning monthly magazine, Business Venezuela, which features in-depth reporting on domestic and foreign events directly affecting the local business community. In addition to Living in Venezuela, it publishes a reference guide on chamber members in its annual Year Book, and a guide for would-be investors, Investing in Venezuela.

Additionally, the Chamber hosts monthly luncheons, which feature addresses by business and government personalities, and organizes seminars on various topics of business interest, including new legislation, economic and financial trends, labor problems and other issues.

Torre Credival, Piso 10, Oficina A
2da. Avda. de Campo Alegre
(Cerca de Avda. Francisco de Miranda)
Campo Alegre
Tel.: 263.0833
Fax: 263.1829
President: Stephen Fellows
Vice President and General Manager: Antonio Herrera-Vaillant B.

COURSES IN SPANISH

Learning the language may be a priority for non-Spanish speaking newcomers to Venezuela. Given a grasp of the grammar and pronunciation, it is easier to get around the country and to feel part of Venezuelan society.

There are a number of study options, ranging from group classes to private language schools and individual tuition. Two non-profit organizations that offer inexpensive, regularly scheduled group classes are the Asociación Cultural Humboldt and the Centro Venezolano-Americano. Private language schools offer a wide variety of courses that are more expensive but have the advantage of being private or semi-private and are tailored to the individual student's needs.

Private tutors are also available - some through language training agencies, and others through referrals. However, like the Spanish courses themselves, the tutors, who generally teach at the student's home or work, vary greatly. Many are unreliable and do not show up for class. The going rate for private tuition is between Bs.700-Bs.1,200 ($7.69-13.19) an hour, with the teacher commuting to the student's home or office. Individual tuition often suits the busy worker best, since intensive lessons can be scheduled around the student's day. However, a group course may be better for someone with a more flexible schedule who also wants to meet other people.

Higher-level language training (equivalent to an advanced language course at university level) is difficult to find in Caracas. Sometimes it is possible to arrange to take a course in a specialist field or in a Spanish literature course at one of the universities, through arrangement with individual tutors.

Information on various language schools, their facilities, and prices follows:

CLASSES IN CARACAS

NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATIONS

Asociación Cultural Humboldt
Avda. Jorge Washington y Avda. Juan Germán Roscio
San Bernardino
Tel.: 52.6445/7634/9467
Fax: 52.5621
Director: Henning Schrodter-Albers
Program: Two 90-minute classes each week on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at the Asociación. Two levels are offered, with classes of between seven and 10 students. Each course lasts three months for a total of about 36 classroom hours. Courses are offered continually throughout the year and staffers speak German as well as Spanish.
Fees: Bs.3,000 ($32.96) for tuition plus Bs.900 ($9.89) for books.
Other Facts: The Asociación has its own library and also offers courses in German. Cultural events and concerts are held regularly.

Centro Venezolano-Americano
Edif. Centro Venezolano-Americano
Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 751.5511
Fax: 751.5279
Academic Director: Nancy C. Carapaica
Program: Eight levels of Spanish, the last two of which are conversation only. Courses held at the CVA last for three and a half weeks and are offered continually throughout the year. The 1 1/2-hour classes are held Monday through Friday, at 7:00 a.m. and at 9:00 a.m. Evening classes are offered when there is sufficient demand. Classes have between 10 and 15 students. There is an emphasis on grammar rather than conversation.
Fees: Bs.4,320 ($47.47) per course plus Bs.200 ($2.19) registration, and Bs.1,200 ($13.18) for books.
Other Facts: The CVA also offers English-language classes and holds cultural events and concerts. It has its own language laboratory and library.

PRIVATE COMPANIES

Berlitz
Five locations in the city
Tel.: 285.6985, 284.0410
Fax: 284.1426
General Manager: Mr. John Carter
Program: Classes are individually tailored, depending on the student's knowledge of the language, and are held either at a Berlitz center or at the student's home. Teachers rotate to give students experience of different accents. Classes are all conversational, with grammar introduced later. Lessons are taught in 45-minute units during the day, evening or on weekends, with a class consisting of two or more 45-minute units. Lessons can be private or taken with a group organized by the student's employers.
Fees: Dependent on the number of lessons taken, plus registration, books and tapes. Four weeks of two 90-minute classes a week cost Bs.28,800 ($316.48). Total immersion courses are also available, with costs for a one-week course (with lunch) at Bs.102,000 ($1,318.68) plus Bs.4,000 ($43.95) registration and Bs.5,000 ($54.94) for books and cassettes.
Other Facts: Berlitz also has facilities in Valencia, Maracaibo, Puerto La Cruz and Puerto Ordaz and offers other language-training courses.

Cross-Cultural Training Center
Edif. Athos, Piso 1, Apto. 12
Avda. Principal El Cafetal
Entre Santa Mónica y Santa Sofía
Tel.: 92.0127
Fax: 32.7189
Director: Manuel Pino Oropeza
Program: A one-week intensive course in the university town of Mérida in the Andes Mountains. For Bs.150,000 ($1,648.35), students receive 38 classroom hours, a round-trip plane ticket to Mérida, hotel accomodation and excursions.

COURSES IN SPANISH

Learning the language may be a priority for non-Spanish speaking newcomers to Venezuela. Given a grasp of the grammar and pronunciation, it is easier to get around the country and to feel part of Venezuelan society.

There are a number of study options, ranging from group classes to private language schools and individual tuition. Two non-profit organizations that offer inexpensive, regularly scheduled group classes are the Asociación Cultural Humboldt and the Centro Venezolano-Americano. Private language schools offer a wide variety of courses that are more expensive but have the advantage of being private or semi-private and are tailored to the individual student's needs.

Private tutors are also available - some through language training agencies, and others through referrals. However, like the Spanish courses themselves, the tutors, who generally teach at the student's home or work, vary greatly. Many are unreliable and do not show up for class. The going rate for private tuition is between Bs.700-Bs.1,200 ($7.69-13.19) an hour, with the teacher commuting to the student's home or office. Individual tuition often suits the busy worker best, since intensive lessons can be scheduled around the student's day. However, a group course may be better for someone with a more flexible schedule who also wants to meet other people.

Higher-level language training (equivalent to an advanced language course at university level) is difficult to find in Caracas. Sometimes it is possible to arrange to take a course in a specialist field or in a Spanish literature course at one of the universities, through arrangement with individual tutors.

Information on various language schools, their facilities, and prices follows:

CLASSES IN CARACAS

NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATIONS

Asociación Cultural Humboldt
Avda. Jorge Washington y Avda. Juan Germán Roscio
San Bernardino
Tel.: 52.6445/7634/9467
Fax: 52.5621
Director: Henning Schrodter-Albers
Program: Two 90-minute classes each week on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at the Asociación. Two levels are offered, with classes of between seven and 10 students. Each course lasts three months for a total of about 36 classroom hours. Courses are offered continually throughout the year and staffers speak German as well as Spanish.
Fees: Bs.3,000 ($32.96) for tuition plus Bs.900 ($9.89) for books.
Other Facts: The Asociación has its own library and also offers courses in German. Cultural events and concerts are held regularly.

Centro Venezolano-Americano
Edif. Centro Venezolano-Americano
Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 751.5511
Fax: 751.5279
Academic Director: Nancy C. Carapaica
Program: Eight levels of Spanish, the last two of which are conversation only. Courses held at the CVA last for three and a half weeks and are offered continually throughout the year. The 1 1/2-hour classes are held Monday through Friday, at 7:00 a.m. and at 9:00 a.m. Evening classes are offered when there is sufficient demand. Classes have between 10 and 15 students. There is an emphasis on grammar rather than conversation.
Fees: Bs.4,320 ($47.47) per course plus Bs.200 ($2.19) registration, and Bs.1,200 ($13.18) for books.
Other Facts: The CVA also offers English-language classes and holds cultural events and concerts. It has its own language laboratory and library.

PRIVATE COMPANIES

Berlitz
Five locations in the city
Tel.: 285.6985, 284.0410
Fax: 284.1426
General Manager: Mr. John Carter
Program: Classes are individually tailored, depending on the student's knowledge of the language, and are held either at a Berlitz center or at the student's home. Teachers rotate to give students experience of different accents. Classes are all conversational, with grammar introduced later. Lessons are taught in 45-minute units during the day, evening or on weekends, with a class consisting of two or more 45-minute units. Lessons can be private or taken with a group organized by the student's employers.
Fees: Dependent on the number of lessons taken, plus registration, books and tapes. Four weeks of two 90-minute classes a week cost Bs.28,800 ($316.48). Total immersion courses are also available, with costs for a one-week course (with lunch) at Bs.102,000 ($1,318.68) plus Bs.4,000 ($43.95) registration and Bs.5,000 ($54.94) for books and cassettes.
Other Facts: Berlitz also has facilities in Valencia, Maracaibo, Puerto La Cruz and Puerto Ordaz and offers other language-training courses.

Cross-Cultural Training Center
Edif. Athos, Piso 1, Apto. 12
Avda. Principal El Cafetal
Entre Santa Mónica y Santa Sofía
Tel.: 92.0127
Fax: 32.7189
Director: Manuel Pino Oropeza
Program: A one-week intensive course in the university town of Mérida in the Andes Mountains. For Bs.150,000 ($1,648.35), students receive 38 classroom hours, a round-trip plane ticket to Mérida, hotel accomodation and excursions.

Educaciones Obair, C.A.
Edif. Victoria, Piso 1
Avda. Habana
Oficina 2-B, Los Caobos
Detras de Edif. La Previsora
Tel.: 793.1896, 782.4056
Fax: 793.1896
Director: Bernie O'Keeffe
Program: Students set their own class schedule based on the 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. weekday timetable. Classes are held in the company or at the student's home, in private or in small groups of up to four people. An advanced program also teaches the different aspects of Venezuelan culture.
Fees: Based on a 60-hour course, private lessons cost Bs.96,000 ($1,054,94), with the rate for two students at Bs.102,000 ($1,120.87), and for up to four students, at Bs.108,000 ($1,186.81). There is a registration fee of Bs.2,500 ($27.47) per person.
Other Facts: Courses are also offered in English.

Master's Prep
Torre América
Piso 8, Oficina 809
Avda. Venezuela
Bello Monte
Tel.: 762.2597/7457
Fax: 762.2597
Director: K. Michael Gozur
Program: Six levels of basic Spanish, each level consisting of 72 hours of instruction, plus individually tailored programs for Spanish for specific purposes - survival Spanish, business Spanish and written Spanish for business. Classes have one or two students, either at the students' home or office.
Fees: Bs.1,500 ($16.48) per hour for one person and Bs.1,800 ($19.78) per hour for two.
Other Facts: English courses are also offered.

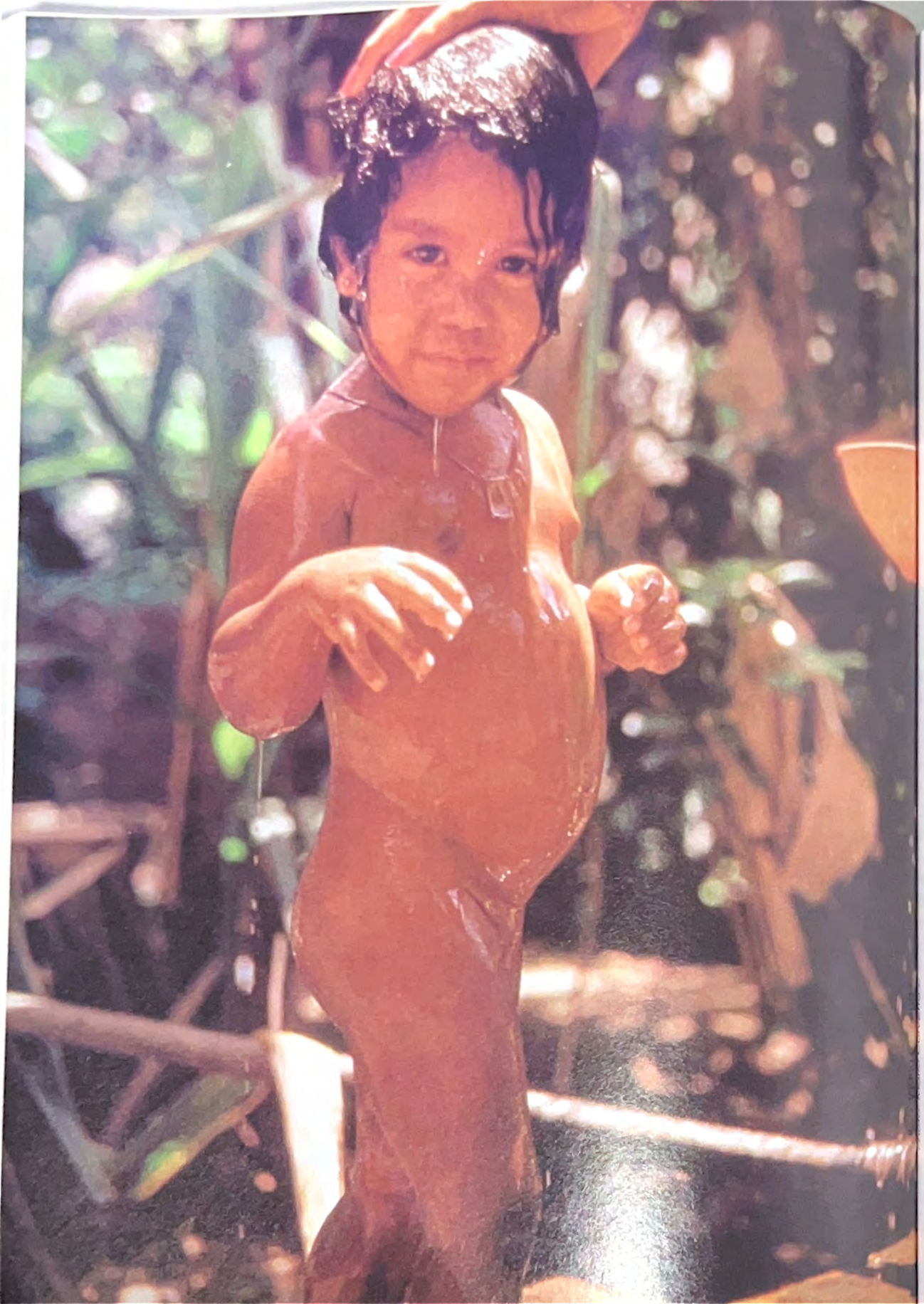
Nucleo de Estudios Lingüisticos y Sociales (Nels)
Quinta Nels
Avda. El Cafetal con Avda. Araure
Chuao
Tel.: 993.9335, 92.1941
Fax: 993.9355
Director: Juan Castro
Program: There are three levels - basic, intermediate, and advanced - with 60 hours of class at each. Students take a minimum of 30 hours each month, and usually require six months to complete the series. Classes are in private, or with a maximum of 10 students, and are held during the morning, afternoon and evening, either at the institute or at the individual's home or office.
Fees: Bs.22,750 ($250) per level, plus extra for books and tapes.
Other Facts: There is a language laboratory. Written translation courses are also offered, along with simultaneous interpretation.

The Technical English Workshop
Centro Polo 1
Torre B, No. 36-B
Calle Chama
Colinas de Bello Monte
Tel.: 752.3218/4584/2861
Fax: 752.6973
Director: Jay Yeo
Program: Four levels of survival Spanish are offered at 75 hours each. Total immersion courses and individualized courses also available. Classes are given in private or in small groups of up to five students in the company or in students' home on weekdays from 7:00 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Fees: starting at Bs.134,000 ($1,472.52) for six people for 75 hours, and go up to Bs.114,000 ($1,582.41) for one person. Price per student for total immersion costs Bs.58,650 ($664.50) and includes 37 1/2 hours a week, daily lunches, materials and costs for special activities. The cost for four weeks is Bs.199,350 ($2,190.68). Books and tapes are not included.
Other Facts: Cultural orientation and English courses are also offered.

CLASSES OUTSIDE CARACAS

In Maracaibo, the Centro Venezolano Americano (CEVAZ) at Calle 63, entre Avdas. 3-E y 3-F offers language lessons (Tel.: 91.1436/1980/1880). Classes, in six levels, are held from 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

In Valencia, there are many individual tutors. Berlitz also operates in the city at Avda. Bolívar Norte, Centro Comercial Los Sauces (Tel.: 21.2074). An alternative is Laboratorio de Idiomas of the University of Carabobo, Calle 125, a half block east of Avda. Bolívar, Kerdell. Information can be obtained at: 22.8798.



CHAPTER VII

HEALTHY LIVING

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Caracas is fortunate in having several outstanding hospitals and clinics that maintain high standards of health care. Except for a handful of public entities, many facilities in Caracas are equal to those in the United States in terms of modern equipment and well-trained doctors.

The term "clinic" is used for private institutions. A clinic usually has inpatient services as well as doctors' offices, laboratories and outpatient services. The term "hospital" generally refers to government-owned and administered institutions that offer free or inexpensive care to the needy and to emergency cases. Some private institutions also use the term "hospital."

Newcomers should be aware that a patient will not be admitted to a private facility without financial guarantees, such as an insurance card. This applies both when the patient enters as an emergency case where hospitalization is required, and when admitted for treatment or surgery on doctor's orders. Before a patient is even seen by a doctor, paperwork must be completed and a financial deposit guaranteed, either with an insurance card or a cash deposit. Most clinics will accept payment of a deposit and the final bill by credit card.

Hospitalization insurance, including coverage for surgery, maternity care and accident injuries, is an absolute necessity for anyone planning to live in Venezuela for any length of time. Most policies from countries of origin reimburse medical expenses upon submission of appropriate documentation.

Local insurance companies offer many different types of health and life policies, with coverage on an annual basis. Individual businesses may provide employees with hospitalization insurance, but such arrangements are the result of specific clauses in the employee's contract. Many policies only provide limited coverage, so it is wise to buy a special policy rather than to pay charges above the normal limits of the regular policy. This extra coverage is very expensive, but can be a budget saver in the long run.

Insurance in Venezuela normally does not cover checkups, prenatal care, laboratory work or prescriptions. These medical-related expenses are deductible, however, from Venezuelan income taxes.

The per-day cost of a hospital room varies according to the clinic and the type of medical care required. A three-night hospital stay for childbirth in an average-priced clinic costs

BATHING BEAUTY - Washing away the dirt of the day.

about Bs.45,000 ($495.51), including all treatment, with a companion staying in the same room. In Venezuela, it is common for relatives to remain at the bedside of a hospital patient and private rooms are normally equipped with a pull-out bed for this purpose. It is recommended that family members make use of such facilities to ensure that the patient receives prompt attention, particularly during night hours.

The following list of hospitals and clinics includes only recommended private and public institutions in which English-speaking staff are usually on duty. For a complete listing of medical facilities, the Caracas Metropolitan Telephone Book Yellow Pages may be consulted.

HEALTH CARE IN CARACAS

EMERGENCY AND AMBULANCE SERVICES

In an emergency, the patient may be taken to any of the hospitals or clinics listed in this section. If a patient cannot be moved, the Centro Móvil de Medicina Permanente is an emergency service with doctors who make 24-hour house calls (Tel.: 483.7021/6092, 41.2439).

Individuals and companies may also wish to contract the services of Rescarven, which provides ambulance service, complete with physician and paramedics, from anywhere in the city to any clinic. Ambulances specially equipped for pediatric emergencies are also available. Rescarven is on Avda. Orinoco, at the end of Calle Monterrey in Las Mercedes (Tel.: 263.1232/0922). The monthly payment can be billed automatically to a credit card and can cover all family members.

Aeroambulancia	Tel.: 91.5791, 92.6131/8980
Del Este (Altamira)	Tel.: 32.0251/0750, 261.7871, 31.6529
Emergency (across from Nuevo Circo)	Tel.: 545.4545/2111/0622
Silva (El Rosal)	Tel.: 33.7723, 32.7182, 31.2222

Other emergency numbers:

Alcoholics Anonymous	Tel.: 751.8101, 752.6914
Blood Bank	Tel.: 81.0654/0655
CIATO (Intoxication and Poisoning Advisory Service - for snake bites)	Tel.: 662.6878
Drug Help Line	Tel.: 161
General Poisoning Center, Hospital Periférico de Coche (for scorpion stings)	Tel.: 681.0111/1515/1717/1000
Radio Contact	Tel.: 661.9222

HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

Altamira

Clínica El Avila
Avda. San Juan Bosco y 6ta. Transversal
Tel.: 208.1111/1001/1003

Bello Monte

Clínica Caurimare
Avda. Caurimare
Tel.: 752.3033/3134/3624

Campo Alegre

Clínica Sanatrix
4ta. Avda. y 2da. Calle
Chacao
Tel.: 31.3022

Caurimare

Policlínica Metropolitana
Calle A-1
Tel.: 908.0140/0100

El Cafetal

Clínica Santa Sofía
Avda. Principal de Santa Sofía
Tel.: 985.4122/4233

La Floresta

Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222

La Florida

Policlínica Méndez Gimón
Avda. Andrés Bello
Entre Avdas. Las Palmas
y Los Manolos
Tel.: 782.3655/3734/1310

Las Mercedes

Clínica Cardiológica San Pablo
Calle La Peña y Calle La Guairita
Lomas de Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.2301/2801
Emergency: 91.2121/5454, 92.2001/2901

Policlínica Las Mercedes
Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.0555/2444, 752.1177

La Trinidad

Centro Médico Docente La Trinidad
Avda. Intercomunal El Hatillo
Tel.: 93.3122/3034/3255/3845/7735

Prados del Este

Centro Clínico de Maternidad Leopoldo Aguerrevere
Final de Avda. Río Manapire
Parque Humboldt
Tel.: 979.2622

Sabana Grande

Policlínica Santiago de León
Avda. Libertador
Tel.: 71.9151/9159

San Bernardino

Clínica de Emergencia Infantil
Edif. Topacio, Piso 4
Avda. Avila
Entre Avdas. Caracas
y Gamboa
Tel.: 51.6111/7531/6202/6402

Hospital de Clínicas Caracas
Avda. Panteón con Alameda
Tel.: 574.2011/6311/9311

Hospital Privado Centro Médico de Caracas
Final de Avda. Eraso
En frente de Plaza El Estanque
Tel.: 52.2222, 509.9191/9111

Instituto de Otorrinolaringologia
Avda. Cajigal No. 48
Tel.: 51.7555/7664/7446/7046/7646

Instituto Diagnóstico
Avda. Anauco
Tel.: 51.1133/1142/1360/1415/1160

San Román

Instituto de Clínicas y Urología Tamanaco
Calle Chivacoa
Tel.: 92.2222, 907.0111

Vista Alegre

Clínica Vista Alegre
3ra. Calle
Tel.: 443.2055/2144/2237/2401/2090/2227

Specialized clinics for psychiatric treatment, including alcohol and drug abuse treatment, are:

Los Palos Grandes

Clínica Casablanca
Quinta Casablanca
2da. Avda. y Transversal 4
Tel.: 283.2524/6824

El Cedral, Clínica Residencia
Prolongación Los Manolos de la Florida
con Calle La Florida
Tel.: 782.0893/4995/2348

Government Hospital:

Los Chaguaramos Hospital Clínico
Ciudad Universitaria
Tel.: 606.7111

Main Venezuelan Social Security (IVSS) Hospital:

Antímano

Hospital Miguel Pérez Carreño
Vuelta el Pescozón, Bella Vista
Tel.: 49.8671/8675

DOCTORS

Many doctors and dentists in Venezuela, particularly specialists, speak English fluently because they have done postgraduate studies in the United States, Canada or Europe.

The following list is composed of English-speaking physicians who have had successful professional relationships with foreign patients. Newcomers may also want to ask friends or colleagues to recommend a pediatrician, gynecologist or dentist, since this is often the best way to find a specialist. The various consulates also maintain lists of physicians who have registered with their offices. A listing of doctors, by specialty, is in the Caracas Metropolitan Telephone Book's Yellow Pages.

It should be noted that physicians in Venezuela are not connected with health plans. Therefore, full responsibility for filling out pertinent forms for the doctor's signature rests with the patient or his family.

One needs to bear in mind that though medical practices may vary between this country and other countries, effective treatment can be found in Venezuela. The best patient is one who is well-informed and develops a good relationship with his physician.

For the academically minded, research libraries at the Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas, or IVIC in Altos de Pipe, and Centro Medico Docente La Trinidad in La Trinidad receive the standard medical journals and are open to the public.

CARDIOLOGISTS

Altamira

Dr. Henry Collet
Unidad de Exploración
Clínica El Avila
Avda. San Juan Bosco y 6ta. Transversal
Tel.: 261.6803/0787, 208.1111/1362/1363
Hours: 1:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

La Floresta

Dr. Pablo Blanco
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday)

Dr. Víctor Ruesta
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

San Bernardino

Dr. José Ernesto Barceló
Hospital de Clinicas Caracas
Avda. Panteón con Alameda
Tel.: 575.0513/0675/0809
Beeper: 74.5111 Code: 714
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

Dr. Henry Brik
Hospital de Clínicas Caracas
Piso 4, Oficina 433
Avda. Panteón con Alameda
Tel.: 574.7513
Beeper: 74.6311 Code: 4002
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

Dr. Antonio José Laplace
Policlínica La Arboleda
Avda. Cajigal
Entre Plaza La Estrella
y Avda. Panteón
Tel.: 51.2805/6513
Hours: 2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Tuesday, Thursday)

Dr. Tomás Sanabria
Hospital Centro Médico de Caracas
Edif. Anexo, Consultorio 5A
Plaza El Estanque
Tel.: 51.5362, 52.5408
Hours: 2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday)
8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Tuesday, Friday)

PEDIATRIC CARDIOLOGIST

San Bernardino

Dr. Saúl R. Pérez
Consultorio 908
Avda. Panteón con Calle Gamboa
Tel.: 574.5474
Hours: 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

DERMATOLOGISTS

Caurimare

Dr. Gilberto Castro Ron
Policlínica Metropolitana
Calle A-1
Tel.: 986.1643
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

Dr. Victor Jaime Battan
Policlínica Metropolitana
No. 2-E
Calle A-1
Tel.: 986.7823
Home: 239.6540
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

La California

Dr. Jacobo Obadia Serfaty
Torre Profesional La California
Piso 2. Oficina 2-6
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
La California
Tel.: 21.1076/1977/3294/0828
Hours: 10:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)
9:00 a.m. - noon (Friday)

La Floresta

Dr. Gilberto Tálamo
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (Monday to Friday)

Los Caobos

Dr. Juan María Arroyo
Grupo Médico Bucaral
Piso 5, Consultorio 52
Avda. La Salle
Tel.: 781.3719, 782.9857
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

San Bernardino

Dr. Leopoldo Krulig
Centro Medico de Caracas
Edif. Principal, Piso 1
Consultorio 105
Plaza el Estanque
Tel.: 51.3922, 509.9105
Hours: 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Friday)

Santa Paula

Dra. Ana Miranda Carrasco
Centro Profesional Santa Paula
Torre B, Piso 1, Oficina 106
Avda. Circunvalación El Sol
Tel.: 986.2132
Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
(Monday to Friday)

Dra. María Plaza Lanza
Centro Profesional Santa Paula
Torre B, Piso 1, Oficina 106
Avda. Circunvalación El Sol
Tel.: 986.2132
Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
(Monday to Friday)

EAR, NOSE AND THROAT SPECIALISTS

Chuao

Dr. Edgar Chiossone Lares
Grupo Médico
Avda. Principal Cafetal
Tel.: 91.7310/7266/7144
Hours: 2:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday, Thursday)
8:30 a.m. - noon (Friday)

Dr. Albert DeVeer Parilli
Grupo Médico
Avda. Principal Cafetal
Tel.: 91.7310/7266/7144
Hours: 8:30 a.m.- 11:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
(Monday to Friday)
Emergencies: 9:00 a.m. - noon (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday)

La Florida

Dr. Manuel E. Eman
Instituto Clínico
Unidad O.R.L., Piso 2
Avda. Los Samanes, No. 17
Tel.: 74.4566/7067
Hours: 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)

La Floresta

Dr. Leopoldo Larrazábal
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 3:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
(Monday, Wednesday, Friday)

Dr. Fernan Caballero
Hospital Centro Médico de Caracas
Plaza El Estanque
Tel.: 52.2222
Hours: 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)
9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (Friday)

San Bernardino

Dr. Euclides Páez Graffe
Instituto Otorrinolaringología
Avda. Cajigal
Tel.: 52.8440
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)
4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Friday)

ENDOCRINOLOGISTS

San Ramón

Dr. Mario Paolillo
Instituto Urológico
Calle Chivacoa
Tel.: 907.0128
Hours: 2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

GASTROENTEROLOGISTS

La Floresta

Dr. Carlos Gómez A.
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 3:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

San Bernardino

Dr. Simon Beker
Hospital Centro Médico de Caracas
Plaza El Estanque
Tel.: 52.0462, 509.9376
Hours: 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Monday, Wednesday)
8:00 a.m. - noon (Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)

GENERAL

Altamira

Dr. Ronald Stern
Clinica del Avila
Piso 9
Tel.: 208.1984
Beeper: 74.6311 Code: 4481
Hours: By appointment

INTERNAL MEDICINE SPECIALISTS

Caurimare

Dr. José Weisinger
Policlínica Metropolitana
Piso 1, Consultorio 1-R
Calle A-1
Tel.: 986.9354
Beeper: 74.5111 Code: 3499
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

La Floresta

Dr. Jean Desenne
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Beeper: 752.3177 Code: 301
Hours: 2:30 - 7:00 p.m. (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)

La Trinidad

Dr. Carlos González-Auvert
Centro Médico Docente La Trinidad
Avda. Intercomunal de El Hatillo
Tel.: 93.3122
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

Dr. Paul Haieck
Centro Médico Docente La Trinidad
Avda. Intercomunal de El Hatillo
Tel.: 93.8235/8325
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (Monday, Wednesday)

San Bernardino

Dr. Eduardo Souchon
Hospital de Clínicas Caracas
Avda. Panteón con Alameda
Tel.: 574.3498/9580/2809
Hours: 2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)

Dr. Bernardo Vainrub
Hospital de Clínicas Caracas
Consultorio 320/322
Avda. Panteón con Alameda
Tel.: 574.1268, 586.4818
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - noon, 2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday)

NEUROSURGEONS

Campo Alegre

Dr. Peter Braun
Clínica Sanatrix
4ta. Avda. Campo Alegre con 2da. Calle
Tel.: 31.3022
Hours: 6:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m.

La Floresta

Dr. Rafael Galera
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)

OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS

Very few obstetricians in Venezuela practice natural childbirth. The local rates for cesarean section, induction of labor, and use of medication in labor and delivery are high by North American and European standards. Women expecting to give birth in Venezuela are advised to interview potential obstetricians very carefully before committing to one.

Prenatal testing for genetic and other disorders, which include amniocentesis, and early amniocentesis, as well as high resolution ultrasound imaging and in-vitro fertilization, are performed by the gynecology/obstetrics group at the Centro Medico Docente La Trinidad (Tel.: 93.3122/3034).

Altamira

Dr. Christian Borberg
Clínica El Avila
Avda. San Juan Bosco y Transversal 6
Tel.: 208.1561/1562
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)

Caurimare

Dr. D. Rubinstain
Policlínica Metropolitana
Consultorio 2-R
Avda. Principal, Concade A-1
Tel.: 908.0285/0286, 986.2943
Home: 978.3562
Beeper: 74.6311 Code: 1156
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday)

Colinas de Bello Monte

Dr. Wolfan Boersner
Clínica Caurimare
Avda. Caurimare
Tel.: 751.7953
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)

La Floresta

Dra. Eva Gundberg
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Monday)
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Tuesday)
8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Thursday, Friday)

Dr. Hermogenes López
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Dr. Juan Rivero S.
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (Friday)

San Bernardino

Dr. Juan Godayol Rovira
Hospital Centro Médico de Caracas
Plaza El Estanque
Tel.: 52.0771, 509.9178
Hours: 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)

OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

Caurimare

Dr. Joaquin Aristimuño
Policlínica Metropolitana
Calle A-1
Tel.: 986.6401
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)

Dr. Stanislao Aronowicz
Policlínica Metropolitana
Tel.: 986.5889
Beeper: 31.4533 Code: M-491
Hours: 11:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Friday)

La Floresta

Dr. Ibrahim González Urbaneja
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)

Los Palos Grandes

Dr. Rafael Cortéz
Edif. Cavendes
Piso 6, Oficina 606
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Tel.: 285.2433/1409
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Monday, Friday)

San Bernardino

Dr. Paulus Hanz
Centro Clínico Profesional Caracas
Piso 3, Consultorio 312
Avda. Panteón
Tel.: 574.2091/6235
Hours: 2:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

Dr. Julian Morales Stopello
Hospital de Clínicas Caracas
Consultorio 214
Avda. Panteón con Alameda
Tel.: 574.6554, 52.7191
Hours: 8:30 a.m. - noon (Friday)
2:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Wednesday)

Dra. Clara Uzcátegui
Centro Otorrinolaringología
Avda. Cajigal
Tel.: 51.3391/7555
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)

San Román

Dr. Juan Lozada
Instituto Urológico
Calle Chivacoa
Tel.: 907.0591/0592
Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
(Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)

La Trinidad

Dr. David Lobo (second office)
Centro Médico Docente La Trinidad
Avda. Intercomunal de El Hatillo
Tel.: 93.9957, 99.3122
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon (Monday to Friday)

Las Mercedes

Dra. Carmen de Luciani
Res. La Hacienda, Apto. 31-F
Calle Veracruz
Tel.: 91.3797
Home: 752.6706
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)

San Bernardino

Dr. Samuel Gallego
Hospital de Clínicas Caracas
Consultorio 228
Avda. Panteón con Calle Alameda
Tel.: 574.8710
Beeper: 74.6311 Code: 1243
Hours: By appointment only

Dr. Alfredo Nouel
Hospital Centro Médico de Caracas
Anexo A, Consultorio 475
Plaza El Estanque
Tel.: 52.1542/0040
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
(Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday)

Dr. Agustín Zubillaga
Edif. Normandie, Piso 7
Avda. Vollmer con Andrés Bello
Tel.: 574.1889
Hours: 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGEONS

La Floresta

Dr. Edmundo Henriques
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - noon (Monday to Friday)
4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Tuesday)
Noon - 3:00 p.m. (Thursday)

San Bernardino

Dr. Jesús Díaz Portocarrero
Hospital Centro Médico de Caracas
Medicentro, Consultorio 1-D
Plaza El Estanque
Tel.: 52.8009/4686
Hours: 3:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday)

Dr. Eduardo Krulig
Hospital de Clínicas Caracas
Consultorio 523
Avda. Panteón con Calle Alameda
Tel.: 574.7779/2011
Hours: 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday)

Drs. Pedro Morgado
Pedro Morgado Jr.
Hospital Centro Médico de Caracas
Anexo A, Consultorio 177
Plaza El Estanque
Tel: 51.1971, 509.9177
Home: 963.5414
Hours: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

Santa Rosa de Lima

Dr. Paul Mondolfi
Centro Integral
Penthouse 4
Santa Rosa de Lima
Tel.: 91.2392, 92.4579
Hours: 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Monday)
2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Wednesday)
8:00 a.m. - noon (Friday)

SURGEONS

La Floresta

Dr. Carlos Cogorno
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Thursday)

Dr. Antonio Sucre Alemán
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 2:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Dr. Carlos Sucre Vegas
Consultorio 501, Penthouse
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

San Bernardino

Dr. Luis Arturo Ayala
Hospital de Clínicas Caracas
Avda. Panteón con Alameda
Tel.: 574.2011/6311
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Dr. Gustavo Baquero Aristiguieta
Hospital Centro Médico de Caracas
Edif. Principal, Consultorio 102
Plaza El Estanque
Tel.: 52.5502/6702/1212
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)

Dr. Armando Márquez Reverón
Hospital Centro Médico de Caracas
Plaza El Estanque
Tel.: 52.2404, 509.9278/9111
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday, Wednesday)
9:00 a.m. - noon (Friday)

UROLOGISTS

La Floresta

Dr. Alfonso Dávalos
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Consultorio 4, Planta Baja
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - noon (Monday to Friday)

Dr. Jacques Denis
Consultorio 704-PB
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)

DENTAL CLINICS

There are several dental clinics in eastern Caracas where some personnel speak English, and which provide a wide range of dental services. They are staffed with specialists in the various branches of dentistry and have the latest equipment in the field. Emergency treatment is available on weekdays. The clinics include:

Chuao

Centro de Especialidades Odontológicas, Asociación Civil
Avda. Principal de Chuao
Tel.: 91.6122/6801 Children's services
Tel.: 91.6422/6744/6877/6689 Adults' services
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - noon, 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Friday)

Clínica Odontológica Oreadi
Oficina 218, Piso 2
CCCT
Tel.: 959.1948/1971
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - noon, 2:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)
8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Friday)

DENTISTS

Chuao

Dr. Ernesto Mueller
Centro de Especialidades Odontologicas
Avda. Principal
Tel.: 91.9066/9201
Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Monday to Wednesday)
1:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)

Dr. David Singer
Piso 6, Oficina 604
CCCT, Torre B,
Tel.: 959.2002, 261.1616
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)

La Castellana

Dr. Roberto García Schwengle
Torre Banco Lara
Piso 5, Oficina 1
Avda. Principal La Castellana
Tel.: 261.5074
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)

La Floresta

Dr. Carlos León Díaz
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
(Monday to Thursday)

Las Mercedes

Dr. Leslie Gross
Edif. Itaca, Piso 4, No. 42
Avda. Principal
Tel.: 92.8231, 91.3281
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 2:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
(Monday to Friday)

Sabana Grande

Dr. Pedro Dib
Centro Profesional del Este
Piso 3, Oficina 34
Calle Villaflor
Tel.: 72.4245
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

Dr. Alex Olsen
Edif. Victoria
Piso 3, Oficina 32
Calle Chacaíto
(Entre Boulevard de Sabana Grande y Avda. Casanova)
Tel.: 952.8892/6306
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
9:00 a.m. - noon (Saturday)

San Bernardino

Dr. Tommy Laufer
Edif. Normandie
Piso 4, Oficina 410
Avda. Andrés Bello
Tel.: 576.4129
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)
8:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. (Friday)

ENDODONTISTS

El Rosal

Dr. Enrique Sonnenschein
Policlínica Americana
Piso 4, Consultorio 44
Avda. Venezuela
Tel.: 951.6745/2378, 952.7217/7337
Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
(Monday to Friday)

ORAL SURGEONS

Chuao

Dr. García Arocha
Centro de Especialidades Odontológicas
Piso 4
Avda. Principal
Tel.: 91.9655
Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
(Monday to Thursday)
8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Friday)

Los Palos Grandes

Dr. Esteban Papp H.
Instituto de Odontología Integral
4ta. Avda.
Entre 5ta. y 6ta. Transversal
Tel.: 283.4460
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (Monday, Tuesday)

San Ramón

Dr. Olaf Sandner
Instituto Urológico
Calle Chivacoa
Tel.: 907.0142, 91.7273
Hours: 2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

Santa Rosa de Lima

Dr. César Guerrero
Centro Integral Santa Rosa de Lima
Tel.: 92.6334/9304
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)

ORTHODONTISTS

Chuao

Dra. Cecilia Mazzei
Centro de Especialidades Odontologicas
Piso 1
Avda. Principal
Tel.: 91.6344/6566
Hours: By appointment

Dra. Miren De Velásquez
Piso 4, Oficina 430
CCCT
Tel.: 92.3080
Hours: 2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)

Prados del Este

Dr. Mauro Toledo
Avda. Río Paragua
Edif. Acacias, Planta Baja
Tel.: 979.9631
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

PEDODONTICS (Children's Dentistry)

Chuao

Drs. Raquel de Valladares, Mary de Páez y Pedro Tenreiro
Centro de Especialidades Odontológicas
Avda. Principal
Tel.: 91.6122
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday)

La Castellana

Dra. Lucy Keme
Edif. Banco Lara
Piso 6, Oficina A-1
Avda. Principal
Tel.: 32.9795, 261.3012
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
(Monday, Wednesday, Thursday)

La Floresta

Dra. Sonia León de Pérez
Clínica Instituto Médico La Floresta
Calle Santa Ana y Avda. Principal
Tel.: 285.2111/2257/3222
Hours: 2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)

PERIODONTICS AND ORAL DIAGNOSIS

Chuao

Dr. Ernesto Muller
Centro de Especialidades Odontológicas
Avda. Principal
Tel.: 91.9066
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Monday)
2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Tuesday)
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Wednesday, Thursday)

HEALTH CARE IN MARACAIBO

EMERGENCY AND AMBULANCE SERVICES

Cruz Roja
Tel.: 76.742

HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

Centro Medico Paraíso
Avda. Universidad, No. 11-150
Tel.: 42.5200

Hospital Coromoto
Calle 72 con Avda. 3C
Tel.: 91.2222/3598

Hospital Clínico
Calle 59 con Avda. 15
Tel.: 42.9285

DOCTORS

GENERAL DOCTORS

Dra. Mariela Arraga, Dr. Gerardo Balza
Centro Integral de Medicina Familiar
Calle 72 con Avda. 3D
Tel.: 92.1892/1893
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - noon, 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
(Monday to Friday, by appointment)

Dr. Juan B. Maroso, Dr. Gonzalo Ruiz, Dr. Régulo Leonardi
Centro Médico Paráiso
Avda. Universidad, No. 11-150
Tel.: 41.0222/0228, 42.0276
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

Dr. Gregory Svoboda
Centro Médico de Occidente
Avda. 8, entre calle 75 y 76
Tel.: 75.210, 80.407
Hours: Afternoons only, by appointment

RHEUMATOLOGIST

Dr. Ernesto García MacGregor
Avda. 8, No. 84-51
Tel.: 75.967
Hours: By appointment

DENTISTS

Dr. Eli Abbo
Unicentro Virginia
Avda. 3C
Tel.: 91.7897
Hours: By appointment

Dr. James Sylvester y Dra. Irunu Paz de Sylvester
Policlínica San Luis
Avda. 8 (Santa Rita), No. 84-126
Tel.: 22.1549
Hours: By appointment

HEALTH CARE IN VALENCIA

EMERGENCY AND AMBULANCE SERVICES

Atención Inmediata
Tel.: 171
This is a free, 24-hour state-run ambulance service with 51 ambulances and a helicopter.

Emergency Medical Transport (EMI)
Tel.: 21.1819, 22.4262, 22.7734 (emergencies)
For affiliated members only

HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

Centro Médico Rafael Guerra Méndez
Calle Rondón
El Centro
Tel.: 89.651-653
Emergency: 89.100

Centro Policlínico Valencia
Final Avda. Carabobo
La Viña
Tel.: 21.0555/0565

Clínica Los Colorados (Orthopedic specialty)
Calle 111, No. 103A-120
Los Colorados
Tel.: 21.1153/4503

Clínica Venezuela
Avda. Cedeña
Tel.: 58.981/971

Emergencias de Corazón y Vasos (cardiovascular emergencies)
Calle 140, No.104-60
El Viñedo
Tel.: 21.1127/1995

Maternidad del Este
Calle Navas Espinola
No. 88-386
Tel.: 01.201, 54.044, 05.054

Maternidad Privada
Calle 131
Las Acacias
Tel.: 21.6488

DOCTORS

CARDIOLOGISTS

Dr. Luis José Bellera
Centro Policlínico
Final Avda. Carabobo
La Vina
Tel.: 21.0555/0565
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - noon (Monday, Thursday)

Dr. Victor Julio Bellera Celli
Centro Diagnostico La Alegría
Calle 153
La Alegría
Tel.: 21.6193
Hours: After 5:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

DERMATOLOGISTS

Dr. Raúl Pachín Viso
Edif. Villa D'Este
Piso 2
Carabobo
Tel.: 21.5270/5277
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 1:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m., by appointment

Dra. Marlene Mendoza de Ríos
Centro Diagnóstico La Alegría
Calle 153
La Alegría
Tel.: 22.8320, 21.3086
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
(Monday to Friday)

GASTROENTEROLOGISTS

Dr. José Kolster
Centro Diagnóstico La Alegría
Calle 153
La Alegría
Tel.: 21.1020, 22.2447
Hours: After 4:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

GENERAL

Dr. Oswaldo R. Guerra Sagarzazu
Centro Médico Dr. Rafael Guerra Méndez
Cons. 202
Calle Rondón
El Centro
Tel.: 09.654
Home: 42.2664
Hours: 2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday, by appointment)

NEUROLOGIST (CHILDRENS')

Dr. Jalina Bettancourt
Centro Diagnóstico La Alegría
Calle 153
La Alegría
Tel.: 21.8895/5401
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

OPTICIANS

Fred Behrens
Torre Cuatro, Piso 11
Avda. Cedeno
Tel.: 57.4377/8875
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
(Monday, Wednesday, Thursday)

PEDIATRICIANS

Dra. María Isabel Gull
Centro Diagnostico La Alegría
Calle 153
La Alegría
Tel.: 22.9744
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGEONS

Dr. Nelson García Cevelfo
Centro Policlínica
La Viña
Tel.: 21.6260/6062
Hours: 9:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)

SURGEONS (ENDOSCOPIC)

Dr. Miguel González
Centro Diagnóstico La Alegría
Calle 153
La Alegría
Tel.: 21.6111
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

DENTAL SERVICES

DENTISTS

Dr. Antonio Godoy Rivulta
Centro Diagnóstico La Alegría, Consultorio 205-206
Calle 153
La Alegría
Tel.: 22.5035/5094
Hours 8:00 a.m. - noon (Monday to Thursday)
8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Friday)

ORAL SURGEONS

Dr. Luis Fernando Díaz
Centro Diagnóstico La Alegría
Calle 153
La Alegría
Tel.: 22.8320
Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)
8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Friday)

PERIODONTIST

Dra. Meyda Labarca de Díaz
Centro Diagnóstico La Alegría, Consultorio 201-202
Calle 153
La Alegría
Tel.: 22.8320, 21.0455
Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
(Monday to Thursday, by appointment)

PRESCRIPTIONS AND MEDICATION

Many drugs that can only be purchased with a prescription in other countries are readily sold over the counter at Venezuelan pharmacies. Aspirin, Alka-Seltzer and similar remedies also may be purchased at newspaper kiosks.

In general, birth control pills and antibiotics are available without prescription, while barbiturates are not. To purchase those medicines that require a prescription, the Venezuelan Ministry of Health and Social Assistance requires the dispensing pharmacist to make a copy of the prescription and to record the *cédula* or passport number of the purchaser.

The availability of so many medications without a prescription has generated widespread self-medication in Venezuela, which can cause additional medical problems. Newcomers are urged to consult their doctors.

Pharmacists are also authorized to give some injections. Instead of receiving a shot in the doctor's office, a patient may be sent to the nearest pharmacy to buy and receive the injection on the spot.

The pharmacies in each sector of town take turns remaining open 24 hours a day for emergencies. The address of the *farmacia de turno* is posted on the doors of the other neighborhood pharmacies. The list is also published daily in the major national newspapers. The neon *turno* sign of a pharmacy on 24-hour duty is brightly lit to be easily visible at night.

Certain birth control methods such as the diaphragm, cervical cap, and sponge are not on the market in Venezuela. Spermicidal inserts (Norforms) are occasionally available. Birth-control methods that are readily available include the pill (in various formulations), condoms and the IUD (referred to colloquially as *el aparato*).

Some medications are also sporadically unavailable because of import problems. Likewise, the quality and/or formula of specific medications may not be available in Venezuela. Those persons with chronic conditions or who need continuous treatment (such as a thyroid hormone) should consider bringing medication with them from their home country. Similarly, there is no complete multi-vitamin on the market, so these are also worth bringing.

Many medications on the market here have the same name as in the United States, including Ascriptin, Benadryl, Betadine, Caladryl, Chlortrimeton, Comtrex, Contac, Dimetapp, Dramamine, Escotrin, Feldene, Imodium, Kaopectate, Kenalog, Lomotil, Maalox, Mylanta, Motrin, Norforms, Pedialyte, Premarin, Tagamet, Teldane, and Valium.

(For glossary of medication, see "Appendix," page 467.)

IMMUNIZATIONS

In some areas of Latin America, a large percentage of the population is not inoculated against certain diseases. In Venezuela, however, regular massive vaccination campaigns and extensive public health facilities ensure a high degree of immunity to childhood diseases. Tuberculosis is endemic in lower-class neighborhoods where people live in precarious sanitary conditions.

Basic immunizations for adults living in Venezuela are:

Tetanus-Diphtheria - Booster every 10 years.
Typhoid - Booster every three years.
Yellow Fever - Booster every 10 years (for those living in Yellow Fever regions).

Some adults feel they need to take gamma globulin (3 c.c. every three months, or 5 c.c. every six months) to reduce the risk of infectious hepatitis A. Since gamma globulin is a human blood product, the advantages and risks of this therapy should be discussed with competent medical personnel before a choice is made. Children under the age of 12 do not need gamma globulin, since Hepatitis A causes a very mild illness in children that then provides lifetime immunity.

For children, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following immunization schedule:

DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus) - One each at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months and 18 months.
Polio - One as a newborn, and one each at 2 months, 4 months, and 18 months.
MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) - One at 15 months, with booster at age 10.
Hib (Haemophilus Influenzae) - One each at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, and 18 months.
Hepatitis B - One each at birth, at 2 months and at 25 months. This vaccine is extremely important, since the disease is endemic to Caracas.

Most pediatricians in Caracas also follow this schedule, with occasional modifications, depending on the child's neighborhood. Most vaccinations can be obtained through private doctors and clinics. Occasionally, a patient may be referred to one of the public health centers, maintained by the Venezuelan Ministry of Health and Social Assistance, where the public may receive all important vaccinations, free of charge. Two of the most conveniently located offices are:

Petare

Unidad Sanitaria
Quinta La Gonzalera
Avda. Principal de Buena Vista Transversal 1
Tel.: 21.1201/4257/5990
Hours: 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

Sabana Grande

Unidad Sanitaria
Avda. Libertador
En frente de Petróleos de Venezuela
Las Delicias de Sabana Grande
Tel.: 71.9281
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Monday - Friday)

Are you a VenAmCham member yet?
WHY NOT?
Call the Membership Department at 263.0833.

HEALTH PROBLEMS

As well as general health hazards, there are many health problems specific to tropical areas such as Venezuela. Care should be taken with food and drink and when traveling in the countryside. When camping, it is wise not to spend the night in thatched shelters. The *chipo*, a blood-sucking insect that lives in thatch, is a carrier of Mal de Chagas, a disease that can produce permanent heart damage.

Swimmers should also look for bilharzia warnings, which are generally posted near infested bodies of water. Bilharzia is a liver parasite transmitted by water snails.

AIDS

The first case of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) was reported in Venezuela in 1983. As of March 1993, official statistics detailed 2,342 reported cases and 1,229 deaths.

AIDS destroys part of the body's immune system needed to fight off infections and diseases. It is caused by a virus transmitted through the direct exchange of body fluids. Symptoms include constant fatigue, fever, chills and sweating at night, sudden weight loss, swollen glands, dark colored areas that look like bruises, white spots in the mouth, frequent bouts of diarrhea and a dry cough.

Several government-run hospitals offer treatment for AIDS or people with Human Immune Deficiency Virus (HIV). Among these are Central University Hospital, the Military Hospital, Magallanes de Catia Hospital and Domingo Luciani Hospital. Many doctors associated with private clinics also treat AIDS patients.

Specific information can be obtained from Resurrexit, an interdenominational, AIDS-support organization (Tel.: 91.0774/1070) which is open 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. and 3:00 - 7:00 p.m. weekdays and 9:00 a.m. - noon, Saturday.

There is no vaccine or cure for AIDS. The only means of preventing the disease is by avoiding transmitting the virus through the exchange of body fluids. Every needle used for a vaccination or shot should be new and sterile. Safe sex should be practiced, but it is recommended that only imported latex condoms be used, since they offer more protection against the disease than locally produced or animal-skin condoms. Although the local blood supply is tested, the possibility of transfusions should be discussed very carefully with the attending physician in the event of surgery.

CHOLERA

Cholera is a highly contagious bacterial disease spread through groundwater and soil by contaminated human and animal feces. Generally, it occurs in areas with poor sanitation. The vaccine for cholera confers only temporary and incomplete immunity and is not recommended. Cholera is fatal only if left untreated, and treatment is relatively simple, involving rehydration therapy and antibiotics. The disease is more dangerous for young children, the elderly and persons not in good health. The first symptom is diarrhea, which comes without any warning and continues hourly. At this point, hospital treatment is necessary. Other symptoms include vomiting, muscular cramps and extreme weakness.

After a serious outbreak in Perú in 1991, health officials suggested that various precautions be taken to reduce the chances of a cholera epidemic throughout the Andean region. Particular caution should be exercised with the eating of seafood, since most cholera cases

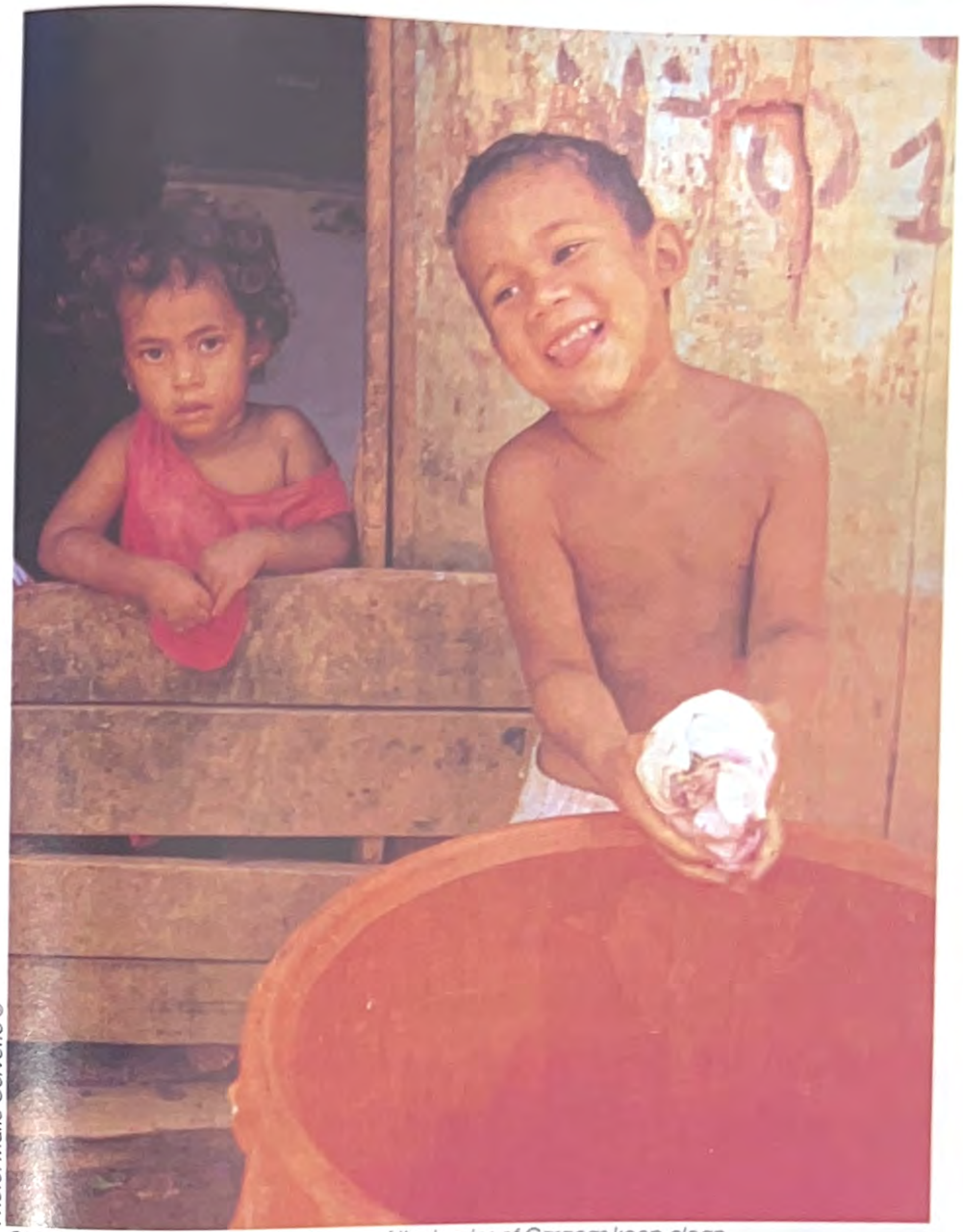


Photo: Mario Corvetto ©

CLEANING UP - Children living in one of the barrios of Caracas keep clean.

to date in Venezuela have been due to seafood-borne infection. In the first five months of 1993, 79 cases of cholera were reported in Venezuela.

Other precautions include boiling drinking water for five minutes or treating it with chlorine; avoiding ice made with untreated water; avoiding uncooked food or that sold from street venders; peeling all fruit before eating; and washing one's hands with hot, soapy water after using the toilet or preparing food.

DENGUE

Until recently, modern cases of dengue were rare in Caracas. In early 1990, however, Venezuela had a serious outbreak of this infectious tropical virus, transmitted by the Aedes Aegypti mosquito.

Symptoms include severe pain in the joints and back, high fever, intense headache, sore throat and a rash similar to that of German measles. The disease takes several stages. After an initial fever, which can go as high as 104° F (40° C) and lasts 48 to 96 hours, there is a remission period followed by profuse sweating. Recovery seems possible for about a day, but this is followed by a second bout of fever and rash, from which it can take several weeks to recover. While three strains of the virus are generally no more serious than the flu, a fourth strain called *hemorrhagic dengue*, which appeared for the first time in Venezuela during the recent epidemic, can cause shock, internal bleeding and sometimes death.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

POTIONS AND PILLS - A variety of spells and good luck charms can be purchased in perfumerias.

There is neither a vaccine for dengue nor a medicinal treatment for the fever. The only prevention is to eliminate potential mosquito breeding grounds, especially areas where water can stagnate.

Aspirin or related medications should not be taken by sufferers of dengue, because it will make internal bleeding worse for those suffering from the hemorrhagic strain. Medical attention should be sought immediately.

FLU AND VIRUSES

There always seems to be some sort of flu or viral ailment with flu-type symptoms going around Caracas. Though the climate is benign, daily temperature changes that range from chilly mornings to extemely hot middays and cool evenings appear to make the population highly susceptible to this type of ailment. The high level of pollution in the atmosphere, particularly in Caracas, does not help.

It can also be easy to catch a chill during the rainy season, which runs from May to November. Chills are often accompanied by a runny nose, a lingering cough, muscle ache, and, suddenly, a first-class case of *gripe* has developed.

With most bouts of flu, the best treatment is to drink plenty of fluids and rest in bed. Aspirin or acetaminophen will usually relieve most muscle pain and discomfort. Aspirin should not be given to children for a fever without first consulting a pediatrician, since its use during a viral infection is associated with the development of Reye's Syndrome. If symptoms such as achy bones or eyes, stomach upsets and diarrhea persist for more than a couple of days, a doctor should be consulted.

HEPATITIS

This liver disease comes in two different forms - hepatitis A or B. Hepatitis A is common where there are rudimentary sanitation facilities, and is spread through improper hygiene, contaminated food and water and sexual intercourse.

Symptoms include headache, fever, vomiting and loss of appetite, and can cause weakness for up to three months. Drugs should not be used as they may increase damage to the liver. The only treatment is rest and drinking lots of liquids. Immune serum gamma globulin may be taken as a precaution against the disease, but it is not totally effective.

Hepatitis B is more serious than Hepatitis A and is contracted through direct exchange of body fluids with an infected person. However, the symptoms for this strain are similar to those for Hepatitis A, with the added possibility of jaundice. Fever is usually absent or mild. There is no known treatment for chronic Hepatitis B.

MALARIA AND MOSQUITOES

Once believed to be eradicated in Latin America, reported malaria cases in Venezuela jumped from 11,127 in 1984 to almost 50,000 in 1990. This resurgence has been attributed to declining living standards in rural areas, due to increased population growth and scarce resources. However, as a result of increased public health efforts in affected regions, only 21,240 cases were reported in 1992. The country is also the site of several field trials of an experimental malaria vaccine, being tested under the auspices of the World Health Organization. In Venezuela, malaria is largely confined to remote areas, particularly the southeastern Orinoco River basin.

The malaria parasite is transmitted to humans by the bite of a female mosquito of the genus Anopheles, which is prevalent in tropical regions. The mosquito bites only between dusk and dawn. When a person is bitten, malaria parasites are injected into the bloodstream and then carried into the liver. After days, weeks or years, they are released back into the bloodstream in repeated cycles, when they enter red blood cells, mature, reproduce, then burst out again into the plasma. Symptoms occur only when the parasites are free in the blood plasma, and some types can remain in the liver for years before breaking out.

Symptoms begin with chills and often a headache and are followed by a fever, which can be as high as 104° F (40° C), delirium and sweating. The most serious form of malaria goes on to cause shock, kidney and liver failure, coma, and even death.

Anyone planning a trip to an area where there is a risk of malaria is advised to take along plenty of repellents and mosquito netting as precautionary measures. Medication is also available that can lessen the severity of the disease if it is contracted, but won't prevent it.

Symptoms such as headaches, fever, etc. experienced on return from a trip should be reported immediately to a doctor, along with the information that a malaria-infected area was visited. This is doubly important for those persons returning directly to the United States or Europe where malaria is uncommon and a misdiagnosis can be fatal.

The Venezuelan Health Ministry recommends that both national and foreign travelers planning to visit the states of Amazonas, Apure, Bolívar, and Sucre take preventative anti-malaria treatment before leaving. This can take the form of several different types of tablets, normally including a weekly dose of chloroquine and another daily pill, which can be nivaquine. A course of the prescribed pills must be started two weeks before traveling to infected areas, and continued six weeks after returning home.

Treatment is available at El Cementerio, Zona 10 de Malariología, Final Avda. Roosevelt, (Tel.: 62.1658/6772). Hours are 8:00 a.m. - noon, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday).

Even where malaria is of no risk, mosquitoes can prove bothersome. There are two types - the actual mosquitoes, known as *zancudos*, and the tiny midges, known as *jejenes*. *Jejenes* are noiseless, practically invisible pests that bite straight through clothing, particularly around the ankles, producing an itch that can last for weeks. Insect repellent offers some protection, and bites can be treated with vinegar or a paste made of meat tenderizer or *papain* and water.

As well as the traditional methods of eradicating mosquitoes, such as spraying, homeowners are urged to cut their grass often and to remove accumulated rainwater from flowerpots, barbecue grills or other receptacles.

MAYO

The month of May, marking the onslaught of the rainy season, prompts in many residents galloping cases of Mayo, the popular name for the diarrhea common in Caracas at that time of the year. Though the Caracas water supply is heavily chlorinated, it contains more impurities at the start of the heavy rains. Germs breed in areas lacking proper sewage control. Soil and sewage that may contain parasite eggs are washed down from the hillsides; subsequently, when the mud dries, parasite eggs and bacteria rise into the air in dust particles.

The best precaution against Mayo (or at any time of the year) is to drink bottled or filtered water or to boil tap water for drinking for a good 20 minutes.

If Mayo persists for more than two days, a doctor should be consulted. Young children with diarrhea should receive the attention of a physician without delay due to the danger of dehydration.

PARASITES AND AMOEBAS

Amoebas and other microscopic parasites attack the gastrointestinal tract and the liver. The organisms thrive in unsanitary conditions such as impure drinking water, fruits and vegetables grown with sewage as fertilizer and improper refrigeration.

These parasites manifest themselves with one or more of the following symptoms: fatigue, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, headaches, diarrhea or constipation, blood or mucus in stools and weight loss.

A common parasite that lives in the intestine is giardia. Symptoms include yellow, bad-smelling diarrhea with bubbles or froth but without blood or mucus, and an uncomfortable swollen abdomen, mild cramps and lots of gas.

Laboratory tests are required to identify the specific parasite, and to determine whether

liver complications exist. Fresh stool and urine samples will be needed for the laboratory. Containers can be bought at pharmacies; for feces, ask for *una caja para heces para el laboratorio*, and for urine, ask for *un vaso para orina*. These ailments are treatable with medication.

RABIES

Any fur-bearing animal may be a rabies carrier. A rabid animal acts strangely, foams at the mouth, and cannot eat or drink. Rabies is transmitted by a bite from the infected animal. If someone is bitten by a rabid animal, the wound should be washed thoroughly with soap and water and then swathed in antiseptic. When an infected animal bites through clothing, the garment should be handled carefully, since the rabies virus spreads easily and may enter the body through any small cut in the skin.

If the animal seems too dangerous to try to catch, cannot be found, or shows signs of rabies, the victim should begin the prescribed series of shots immediately. These are administered by the public health centers or *unidades sanitarias*. A victim bitten on the face or head will have to have an injection of immune serum without delay and before the rabies vaccine series may be administered.

If possible, the animal should be confined for observation for at least two weeks. The Instituto Nacional de Higiene does not have the facilities for confining animals, so the nearest veterinary surgeon should be contacted. At the end of a month, the animal should be checked again. Even vaccinated animals should be examined carefully since not all rabies vaccinations are successful in inhibiting the disease.

If the animal's owner objects, the animal may be placed under the authority of a veterinary surgeon or with the animal shelter of the Sociedad Protectora de Animales (Tel.: 49.2608/1684).

In cases where the animal has been killed or dies, an autopsy of the brain must be performed by a trained pathologist. This can be done at The Instituto Nacional de Higiene, Departamento de Mal de Rabia, Ciudad Universitaria, Plaza Venezuela (Tel.: 662.6895).

SCORPION STINGS AND SNAKE BITES

Scorpions are a problem in Caracas especially on the lower floors of buildings in some of the newly developed areas, such as Los Naranjos del Cafetal and Prados del Este, or close to green areas.

They like to hide in dark places, including inside shoes and under cabinets, but also can be seen wandering down a hallway in search of their prey of insects and small animals. They are a very real danger for babies crawling on the floor.

The scorpion sting, while extremely painful for an adult, can be fatal for a child. In the case of a sting in the Caracas metropolitan area, the victim should go immediately to the Centro Toxicologio of the Hospital Periferico de Coche, Avda. Intercomunal El Valle, near the Hipodromo (Tel.: 681.0111/1515/1717/1000). It is open 24 hours a day. If outside the Caracas area, the victim should go to the nearest public hospital since private doctors or clinics rarely have experience dealing with scorpion stings. If possible, the scorpion should be captured and taken to the medical facility to be properly identified.

Scorpion serum is also manufactured at the School of Pharmacy of the Universidad Central, where it is available for sale. It is manufactured with horse gamma globulin; those with allergies may want to be pre-screened for sensitivity.

Most visitors to Venezuela will never see a snake in the wild, let alone a poisonous one. Nevertheless, as natural habitats are destroyed through urban growth, snakes have been known to seek shelter in kitchen cupboards, backyards and compost heaps. Most are harmless garden snakes that do their job in the ecological chain, keeping the rodent and insect populations at a balanced level.

However, anyone with plans to camp or hike in Venezuela should be familiar with the poisonous snakes of the country and keep the two principal snake-bite serums handy.

The poisonous snakes found in Venezuela include:

Bothrops

This group includes the *tigra mariposa*, the *mapanare*, and the bushmaster, all well-camouflaged by skin patterns of soft beige and brown. They seek dark, shady areas and are known for their aggressiveness.

Rattlesnakes (cascabeles)

Rattlesnakes are easily identifiable by their distinctive rattles. They seek high ground, especially during the rainy season, and like to bask in the sunshine on walls and mountain trails. They are a bit easier to spot than the bothrops because their black and white diamond backs give them less protective coloring. Compared with bothrops, rattlesnakes are non-aggressive.

Corals

The tiny coral snake is brightly colored with beautiful bands of red, black and yellow. This snake has such a small mouth that it would have to strike directly at some narrow part of the body, such as a fingertip, to enable it to grasp and bite firmly. The coral snake's venom is deadly and the antivenin is not manufactured in Venezuela, but is imported as needed from Costa Rica.

Snake Bite First Aid

The snake antivenin manufactured in Venezuela is a combination serum called Polivalente or Antiofídico and is effective for both bothrops and rattlesnakes. Serum should be refrigerated until needed. For transport during camping trips, the serum should be kept in a cool place.

Snake-bite serum is made with horse gamma globulin. Those allergic to horses or with other allergies should be tested for an adverse reaction to the serum before considering a camping or hiking trip. Serum can be purchased from the Laboratorio de Biotecnología, on

camping or hiking trip. Serum can be purchased from the Laboratorio de Biotecnología, on the first floor of the School of Pharmacy at the Central University of Venezuela.

For help in the case of a snake bite and for general advice on all poisons, CIATO, the Intoxication and Poisoning Advisory Service at the School of Pharmacy of the Central University, should be contacted (Tel.: 662.6878, from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m., Monday through Friday).

When treating a snake-bite victim, time is the most important factor. If there is no hospital nearby, the serum should be injected subcutaneously into each thigh of the victim before he is taken to the emergency ward of the nearest hospital for further treatment. If a hospital is less than an hour away, the serum should be transported with the patient, who can have it administered intravenously.

The wound should not be cut open, nor should a tourniquet be applied. The bite should be washed with soap and water and as much poison as possible extracted by pressing mechanically on the skin around the wound. The poison should not be sucked out by the mouth.

The victim should remain calm to prevent increased blood circulation. He should not run or drink alcohol or stimulants, such as coffee, and ice should not be put on the bite. However, liquids should be consumed.

SUNBURN AND HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

Venezuela's location in the tropics makes sunburn and heat-related illnesses a problem at any altitude - something newcomers often learn the hard way. Fair-skinned Venezuelan natives may have large, dark, pre-cancerous "age spots" even before reaching adulthood, due to too much sun during childhood.

The American Academy of Dermatologists now recommends that North Americans do not start their day without first coating one's exposed skin with a sunscreen with a protection rating of a minimum of 15. This practice is even more important in Venezuela. At the beach, a sunscreen should be used with a high protection factor. Fair-skinned people have been advised to use a protection level of at least 20 (30 - 45 for children). The brand used should provide for protection against both UVA and UVB radiation.

A wide-brimmed hat, beach umbrella or shady palm tree can help protect sunbathers as well. Too much sun during the hottest part of the day (10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.) should be avoided. Clouds, cool water or breezes do not mean the sun is any less harsh. One of the dangers is burning the tops of the feet while strolling along the beach or one's shoulders and backs of knees while swimming and snorkeling.

For tanning, brief exposures to the sun, gradually lengthened, will help provide color and prevent a nasty sunburn that will only peel away. For too much sun, a skin lotion can provide some relief and will help keep the skin from drying out. Likewise, lip balm will help prevent chapping and cracking of lips.

Heat cramps occur in hot weather to those who sweat a great deal, and are due to insufficient salt in the diet. Cramps can occur in the legs, arms or stomach, and there may be vomiting. Sufferers should relax in a cool place and drink a water and salt mixture until the cramps have disappeared.

Heat exhaustion can also occur. Symptoms include weakness, clammy skin, rapid and weak pulse, below-normal body temperature and vomiting. Treatment is the same as for heat cramps.

Heat stroke occurs in older people, chronic alcoholics, diabetics, and those with poor

circulation. Symptoms include red, dry and hot skin, high fever of up to 108° F (42°C), rapid pulse, and in severe cases, unconsciousness. Treatment includes soaking the victim in cold water until his fever drops to below 102°F (39°C) and then covering him with a blanket to prevent chills. Medical help should be sought as soon as possible.

TYPHOID

This infection of the stomach and intestines affects the whole body. In the first week, symptoms begin like a cold or the flu, with a fever rising more each day until it reaches 104° F (40°C). The pulse is often slow for the amount of fever present, and sometimes there is vomiting, diarrhea or constipation. The high fever and slow pulse continue in the second week with trembling, delirium, weakness and the possible appearance of pink spots on the body. Immunization against typhoid only provides partial immunity.

YELLOW FEVER

Yellow fever is transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito, and is particularly dangerous due to a relatively high fatality rate and lack of an effective medical treatment. Symptoms include a severe headache, vomiting, nausea, muscle pain and fever, which often occur suddenly and in the morning. The pulse rate rises to between 100 and 110 beats per minute for a few days, and then suddenly falls off to about 50 beats per minute. In severe cases, there may be bleeding in the gastrointestinal tract and jaundice. There is no specific treatment other than bed rest. The 10-year immunization shot is recommended, particulary for those planning to visit the Amazonas region.

Vaccinations may be obtained at the Unidad Sanitaria, Avda. Libertador, Sabana Grande, from 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays (Tel.: 71.9281).

DANGEROUS AND POISONOUS PLANTS

There are a number of dangerous and poisonous plants in Venezuela that can kill or cause serious illness. In the section below, the common English name of each plant is listed first, followed by the common Spanish name and the Latin name.

Allamanda or Golden Trumpet
(Jazmín Amarillo) *Allamanda cathartica*
A vine bearing yellow flowers with dark shiny leaves. The bark of the Golden Trumpet or Allamanda is a skin irritant and all parts of the plant are poisonous if eaten.

Angel's Trumpet Tree
(Campana, Corenta de Angel) *Datura Candida*
Angel's Trumpet Tree is a small tree or bush with trumpet-shaped flowers of white, cream beige, or pink, about 25 centimeters (10 inches) long. It has large, thick leaves that are gray-green and velvety. The leaves, flowers, seeds, and smoke from burning the bark are all poisonous. This plant's heavy fragrance can cause nausea.

Balsam Pear
(Balsamito Cundeamor) *Monordica charantia*
The Balsam Pear is a small-leafed vine with yellow flowers, which produces an orange fruit that bursts open when ripe. The fruit's red pulp is edible but the seeds of the fruit are poisonous.

Cashew
(Merey) *Anacardium occidentale*
The Cashew plant is a small tree with red or yellow fruit and a seed (cashew nut) visible at the base. The fruit is edible but the nut should not be handled, since the hull contains a poisonous oil that blisters the skin. Before eating the nuts, they should be roasted until all their oil has evaporated.

Castor Bean
(Ricino, Higuerilla) *Ricinus communis*
The Castor Bean plant has five-pronged, large flat leaves and spiky seed pods and is aquamarine in color with yellowish flowers. The beans of the seed pods are very poisonous if eaten.

Coral Flower
(Emético vegetal) *Jatropha multifida*
The Coral Flower is a small bush or tree with leaves that resemble tiny palm trees; it has red flowers and small round green fruit. The entire plant is irritating to the skin and the fruit, if eaten, is poisonous.

Cowitch
(Pica Pica) *Mucuna pruriens*
The Cowitch is a vine with long seed pods, covered with soft, fine hairs. The hairs on the fruit are extremely irritating to the skin and eyes.

Devil Fruit
(Akee) *Blighia sapida*
The Devil Fruit is a large tree of up to 13 meters (43 feet) that produces bright orange fruit used in jam and preserves. The leaves have three to five pairs of leaflets. The fruit and its seeds are poisonous if not left to ripen on the tree.

Dumb Cane
(Caña Muda, Cucaracha) *Dieffenbachia seguine*
The Dumb Cane is a low ground-cover plant with leaves that are dark green with white patches. The sap is extremely irritating to skin, and the leaves or stem, if eaten or chewed, will paralyze the tongue.

Frangipani
(Ampola) *Plumeria rubra*
The Frangipani is a medium-sized tree, growing to a height of up to eight meters (26 feet) with thick branches and a flat top. Its flowers are yellow, white, or red. The fruit contains winged seeds. The corrosive latex of the plant causes skin irritation and the seeds, if eaten, are extremely dangerous.

Isotoma Longiflora
(No common name)
Isotoma Logiflora is a common garden weed some 30 centimeters (12 inches) tall, with white flowers that are 2-1/2 centimeters (one inch) wide. The sap of the weed produces skin irritation.

Jimson Weed or Thorn Apple
Datura Stramonium
The Jimson Weed or Thorn Apple is a small bush with jagged, foul-smelling leaves. It has prickly fruit with trumpet-shaped flowers in shades of white and lavender. The seeds are poisonous and produce a narcotic effect.

Lantana
(Cariaquito) *Lantana camara*
The Lantana is an ornamental plant with small, serrated green leaves and white, yellow, lavender or orange-red flowers that grow in clusters. A tea brewed from the leaves acts as a tranquilizer, though large amounts can cause intestinal poisoning.

Manzanillo
(Manzanillo) *Hippomane macinella*
The Manzanillo is a seashore tree with gray bark, bright green shiny leaves and green spiky flowers. Its apple-like fruit is poisonous and touching any part of the tree can cause skin inflammation and blistering.

Manzanillo de Cerro *Toxicodendron striat*
The Manzanillo de Cerro is a small tree with compound leaves, small white flowers and white fruit. Touching any part of the tree cause severe skin irritation and inflammation.

Mother-in-law's Tongue
(Lengua de Suegra) *Sansevieria trifasciata*
Mother-in-law's Tongue is a garden plant with stiff upright leaves edged with a yellow border. The leaves, if eaten, produce numbness in the mouth.

Oleander
(Rosa de Berbería) *Nerium oleander*
The Oleander is a popular garden shrub with blue-green leaves. Its flowers, which grow in clusters, may be pink, red, white or yellow and are deadly poisonous if eaten. Touching its leaves or sap may cause skin irritation. Smoke from burning its wood is also extremely toxic.

Poinsettia
(Flor de Pascua or Papagallo) *Euphorbia pulcherrima*
The Poinsettia is a traditional Christmas plant with red, white or pink, kite-shaped, petal-like bracts. The true flowers are small and greenish. Giant and dwarf sizes also exist. The milky sap is dangerous to eyes and open cuts.

Sandbox Tree
(Jabillo) *Hura crepitans*
The Sandbox Tree is a large tree with wide-spreading branches and a spiny trunk that produces a small pumpkin-shaped seed pod that bursts open when ripe. The brown seeds are poisonous and the sap can cause skin irritation.

Tiger's Claw
(Bucare) *Erythina poeppigiana*
The Tiger's Claw is a common tropical genus of tree with about 30 different species. Its flowers are red and claw-shaped. The seeds, bark and roots are all poisonous.

SNAKE BITES

ANIMAL HEALTH

VETERINARIANS IN CARACAS

Many veterinarians make house calls for routine checkups and shots for pets. This can be a real blessing for a busy family or a nervous pet.

La Trinidad

Dra. Myriam Padoma
Consultorio Veterinario
Quinta Phyllis
Avda. San Sebastián
Tel.: 93.0592

Las Acacias

Dr. Rodolfo Reimann
Quinta María Auxiliadora
Avda. María Teresa Toro
Tel.: 62.7243
Beeper: 541.9322 Code: 785

Las Mercedes

Dra. Marie Ballesteros
Clínica Veterinaria del Dr. Ballesteros
Avda. Principal y Calle París
Tel.: 92.7604

Dr. Paolo Del Turco
Clínica Veterinaria del Dr. Ballesteros
Avda. Principal y Calle París
Tel.: 92.7604

Los Campitos

Dr. Cornelio Vuurman K.
Ruta Central
Quinta Doña Aída
Tel.: 978.0202, 77.1650
Cellular: (099) 21.7486
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Saturday)

Los Palos Grandes

Dr. Francis Forelle
Hospital Veterinario
3ra. Avda. y 2da. Transversal
Tel.: 283.3653
Emergency: 283.8622

Dr. Carlos Goldman
Hospital Veterinario
3ra. Avda. y 2da. Transversal
Tel.: 283.3653
Emergency: 283.8622

VETERINARIANS OUTSIDE CARACAS

MARACAIBO

Hospital Veterinario Maracaibo
Calle 67 (Cecilio Acosta), Esquina de Avda. 3C, Campo Creole
La Lago, Casa Nero 9
Tel.: 92.1420, 91.6198/9391
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - noon, 3:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
8:00 a.m. - noon (Saturday)

VALENCIA

Centro Veterinario Los Colorados
Dra. Nancy de Boede
Avda. Guzmán Blanco, No. 108
Los Colorados
Tel.: 22.0906
Hours: 24-hour emergency service
Grooming and boarding

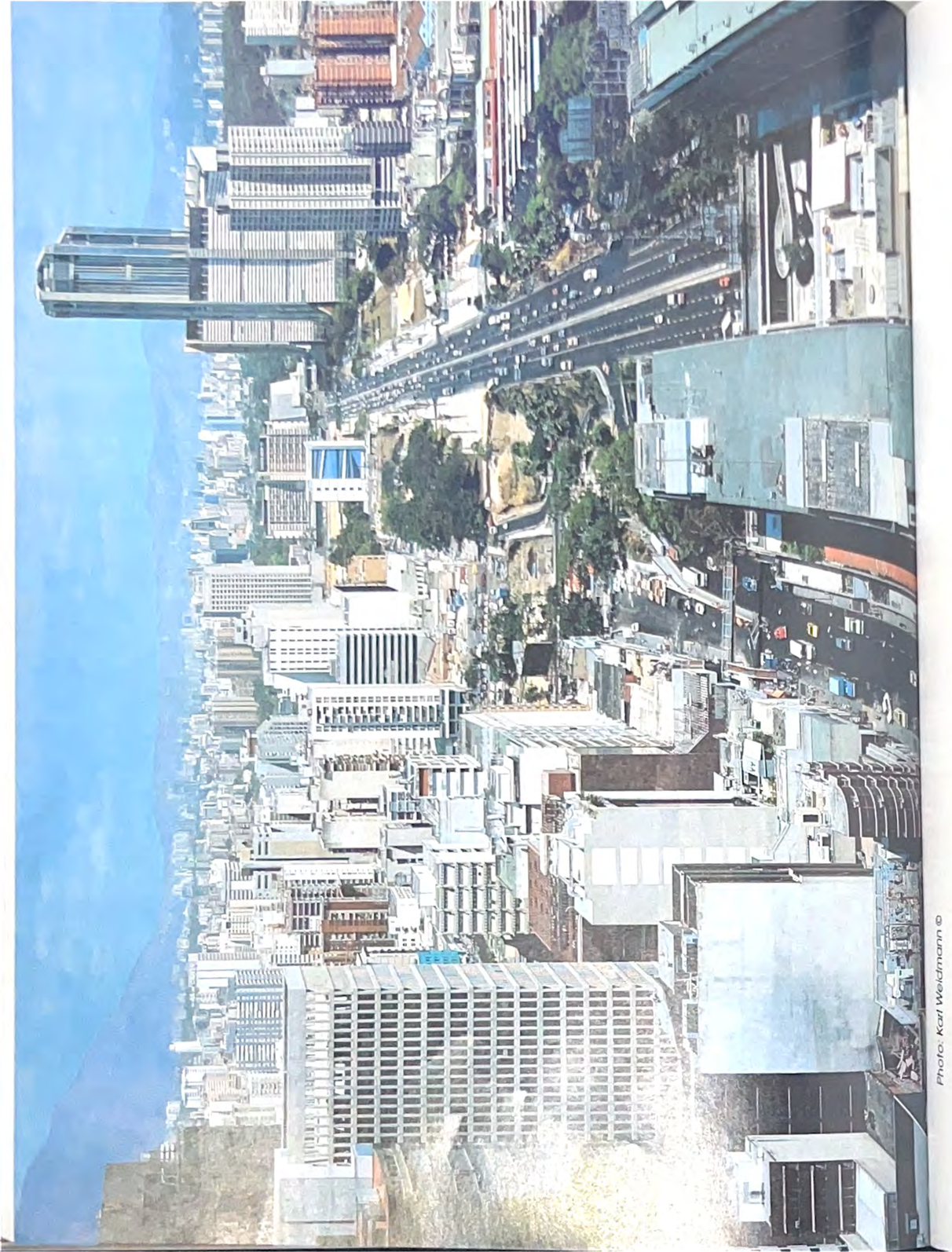


Photo: Karl Weidmann ©

CITY OF SIGHTS - Caracas' downtown area is as well developed as most modern Latin American capital cities.

CHAPTER VIII
FOREIGNERS AND THE LAW

LEGAL PROCESSES

Lawyers are listed in the Yellow Pages of the Caracas Metropolitan Telephone Book. Some also advertise in newspapers. Most companies have lawyers who handle technical and legal details and who can recommend legal counsel for their employees whenever necessary. Foreign embassies maintain lists of registered bilingual attorneys. **(For listings of lawyers, see "Yellow Pages," page 439.)**

Most laws are published as small paperback books, sometimes with commentary discussing the changes from the last version of the law. It is a good idea to get copies of basic laws such as the *código civil venezolano*, the civil code that covers marriage, divorce, inheritance and other fundamental topics, and the *ley orgánica del trabajo*, the basic work law. They can be found in some general bookstores and in many of the specialized bookstores and kiosks near Capitolio and the Plaza Bolívar.

Almost every legal transaction in Venezuela involves *papel sellado*, a special tax paper used for drawing up legal documents, and *timbres fiscales*, or tax stamps, of varying denomination. Both are supposed to be available at post offices and the Ministerio de la Hacienda (Finance Ministry). *Timbres fiscales* should also be available at the offices of the Dirección Nacional de Identificación y Extranjería (DIEX) and are frequently available at newspaper kiosks. Occasionally, *papel sellado* is not available through normal channels but can be bought on the street at prices much greater than its per-page face value of Bs.2.5 ($.03). For those doing a great deal of legal business, it is advantageous to keep a supply on hand.

BIRTH

All children born within the territory of the Republic of Venezuela are entitled to Venezuelan citizenship, regardless of their parents' nationality. Dual citizenship is not recognized; Venezuelan nationality precludes any other. If children born in Venezuela of non-Venezuelan parents subsequently choose their parents' nationality, they automatically forfeit their Venezuelan citizenship.

The Venezuelan Civil Code stipulates that the birth of any child must be registered within 20 days at the Prefectura del Municipio of the district of the hospital or clinic where the birth took place. This is known as the *presentación* of the newborn, although the presence of the baby is not required.

REGISTRATION AND BIRTH CERTIFICATES

The baby must be registered by the father or mother in the presence of two witnesses. Hospitals have details at which Registro Civil the parents should register.

Those registering a newborn should bring both parents' identity cards or *cédulas* with photocopies, and the passports of non-Venezuelan parents; a Spanish translation of the parents' marriage certificate (*partida de matrimonio)* if the marriage took place in Venezuela or was registered here; written notification of birth issued by the hospital and signed by the attending physician, which states the place, date, and time of birth, and the name, height, and weight of the child; one sheet of *papel sellado* and a *timbre fiscale* of Bs.10 ($.11); and two witnesses, though often the parents in line the day of registration serve as each other's witnesses.

A certificate states the registry number or *partida* of the child, and the date of registration. This information and the volume number of the registry book will also be recorded on the hospital birth certificate. The child will be registered with two last names: the father's surname followed by the mother's maiden name. The spelling of the child's name should be checked carefully, since it is nearly impossible to correct later.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

BLUSHING BRIDE - Former Miss Universe Barbara Palacios gets married in style.

The actual document stating that the birth has been registered, the *partida de nacimiento*, will not be issued for two or three weeks, but parents will be given a card stating the time and date to return. Upon return, parents need to know the date the child was registered and his *partida* number, and to bring one sheet of *papel sellado* and Bs.10 ($.11) in *timbres fiscales* for each document copy ordered.

The *partida de nacimiento* is used for much the same legal purposes as a birth certificate in the United States. At least two copies are needed - one to apply for the child's Venezuelan passport and another to register the child at the foreign parents' embassy or consulate.

VENEZUELAN PASSPORT

All children born within the territory of the Republic of Venezuela and included in the Registro Civil, or civil register, should be issued a Venezuelan passport. Although children may subsequently forfeit their Venezuelan citizenship by choosing their parents'

nationality, it is advisable that they have a Venezuelan passport to avoid complications with immigration authorities when leaving and re-entering the country.

Passports, which are valid for five years, are issued by the Dirección Nacional de Identificación y Extranjería (DIEX). Branch offices may not have passports to issue at any given time, so it is best to go to the main office at Plaza Miranda, El Silencio. Most travel agencies have experience in getting new passports and revalidating old ones for their clients and can help expedite the process, thought it is more costly than going directly to the DIEX.

Both parents will need to be present to sign the child's passport.

To obtain the child's passport, parents need to bring an original and photocopy of the *partida de nacimiento;* two passport size photos (preferably color) of the child; originals and photocopies of the parents' identity cards; two forms (one for each parent) naming guardians for the child, with fiscal stamps of Bs.1 ($.01) each; and additional fiscal stamps of Bs.450 ($4.96).

CONSULAR BIRTH REGISTRATION

Parents planning to register their newborn child at their consulate are advised to visit the consulate before the child's birth to pre-check all the documentation necessary and pick up copies of necessary forms. Registration should take place as soon as possible after the child is born.

To register a child at the U.S. Consulate and receive the Consular Report of Birth Abroad, the child's U.S. passport and social security number, several kinds of documentation are needed.

These include the passports of the U.S. national parents; the parents' marriage certificate (original or certified copy, plus a photocopy); two 2 inch x 2 inch (5 cm. x 5 cm.) photos of the child photographed against a white background; the child's birth certificate issued by the hospital or clinic (*boleta de nacimiento*), and one photocopy. Also needed is an original and two photocopies of the official birth certificate.

In the event that only one parent is a U.S. citizen, evidence of that parent's residence and physical presence in the United States is necessary for the child to receive U.S. citizenship. For children born on or after Nov. 14, 1987, the U.S. parent must have lived in the United States for five years, two years of which were after the age of 14. Expired passports, school and college academic transcripts, and letters from former employers can be used as evidence of residence. The child must also be seen by the consular officer.

A comprehensive fee of $50 is charged for this service. Passports for minors are valid for five years. The passport and consular report of birth usually will be issued in two working days.

The citizens' services unit of the U.S. Consulate recommends that parents make an appointment to submit the application. This allows officials to provide more efficient service so that the child in question, often a small baby, does not have to spend a long time in the waiting area.

MARRIAGE

The minimum legal age for marriage in Venezuela is 16 years for males and 14 years for females. However, males and females under 18 require the prior consent of their parents. In the absence of parents, they must obtain the consent of their adoptive parents, grandparents, guardians, or of the judge of the parish or municipality of the home of either of the minors.

NUESTRO TROFEO ES SU

TRANQUILIDAD

SOBRIA PROTECCION
EFECTIVA DEFENSA
Y SOBRE TODO SEGURIDAD.
ESO ES...

MAGNUM
GALERIA DE TIRO

4ta. Transversal de los Cortijos de Lourdes, Edf. Gina, Nivel Sótano (al lado de Rori), Caracas. Telf.: 239. 66.11
Av. Miranda 113-164, Hacia la Av. Bolívar Norte, Country Club, Valencia. Telfs.: (041) 22.62.07

Only civil marriage is recognized under the law of Venezuela; a religious ceremony is entirely optional and is not legally binding.

Civil marriages may take place before either the First Civil Authority or judge of the parish or municipality; the president of the Municipal Board; the civil authority of the district; or the president of the Municipal Council.

The ceremony may be carried out in the office of any of the foregoing officials in the presence of two witnesses over 18 years of age. If the service is held outside the official's office, there should be four witnesses, two of whom must not be closely related to either the bride or the groom.

Before a civil marriage may take place, the parties in question must make an official declaration of their intent to marry in front of any one of the officials mentioned above. They are asked to state under oath their names, ages, professions, civil status, addresses and the names of each of their parents. The bans are then posted for eight consecutive days. If one of the parties has moved within Venezuela in the last six months, bans must also be posted in that person's former municipality. If one of the parties lived outside Venezuela in the past year, bans must be published in a newspaper of the foreign residence 30 days before the scheduled date of marriage in Venezuela.

Civil marriage between two foreign citizens or a Venezuelan and a foreign citizen requires that the foreign party prove that he or she is unmarried, widowed or divorced, and therefore legally entitled to contract marriage under the laws of Venezuela and his or her country, in a document called a *carta de soltería*. This requirement may be fulfilled by a legal declaration in which three witnesses swear under oath that the foreign citizen is qualified to marry.

Each official and each municipality have discretionary power to require other kinds of documentation demonstrating that a foreigner is free to marry. It is extremely difficult for persons in Venezuela on a tourist visa to be legally married. Many binational couples choose to have the civil wedding overseas, and the religious marriage service in Venezuela.

Other documentation necessary for a marriage includes copies of the *partida de nacimiento*, legalized and certified copies of the foreign birth certificate of a foreigner.

CONSULAR MARRIAGE REGISTRATION

The U.S. Embassy does not perform civil marriages. Residents of the United States or any American citizen choosing to be married in Venezuela will need legal proof of the marriage to present in the United States for income tax, passport and other purposes. To obtain this certification, the procedure is as follows:

– A marriage certificate (*partida de matrimonio)* must be obtained from the Municipal Council under whose jurisdiction the marriage was performed. This is obtained from the Archives Department, providing that a sheet of *papel sellado* is taken and Bs.10 in *timbres fiscales* is given for each copy ordered. It is recommended that at least three copies of the *partida de matrimonio* be secured.

– The *partida de matrimonio* must be legalized by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

– The *partida de matrimonio* must be translated into English by a public translator listed with the U.S. Embassy in Caracas.

– Copies of the document in Spanish and English should be presented to the U.S. Embassy for legalization there.

REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGES PERFORMED ABROAD

Foreigners married abroad and Venezuelans who have contracted marriages abroad need to have the foreign marriage certificate certified and legalized in the country of origin, translated by a registered legal interpreter, and inserted in the marriage registry book of the municipality of the family residence. When needed for legal purposes, such as registering a newborn child, settling an insurance claim, or settling a will, the Venezuelan *partida de matrimonio* can be ordered. Legal status is the same as though the couple had been married in Venezuela. In the case of the death of one of the partners, it is possible that the authorities will not recognize an unregistered marriage.

For a marriage that took place in the United States, the steps are as follows:

– The marriage license or certificate must be notarized by a notary public in the county where the marriage took place and then legalized by the county clerk of the county where the notary is registered, or by the state where the marriage took place. The rules vary by state.

– The license must then be legalized by the Venezuelan consulate with jurisdiction over the state in question.

– In Venezuela, the marriage certificate and accompanying documentation must be translated by a registered legal interpreter, and taken to the Registro Civil of the municipality of residence.

DIVORCE

The following are grounds for divorce in Venezuela: adultery; voluntary desertion; attempt by one spouse to corrupt or prostitute the other or their offspring; grave psychiatric problems of one of the partners; addiction to alcohol or other severe forms of pharmacological dependence that make conjugal life impossible; extreme cruelty or serious injury by word or deed that results in irreconcilable differences; a long-term prison sentence for serious crimes; and separation of five years without reconciliation, or legal separation of one year without reconciliation.

There are no factors that specifically affect divorce between a Venezuelan and a foreign citizen. There are no separation requirements prior to the initiation of divorce proceedings. Most divorces in Venezuela are obtained through the legal separation clause, since it is the simplest means available.

Divorce cases are heard by the judge of First Instance in Civil Matters of the municipality where the marital home is situated. The court grants custody of the children of a dissolved marriage to one of the parents following an examination of the arguments set forth. Parents continue jointly exercising legal authority or *patria potestad* over their children following divorce, except when the divorce proceedings establish one parent as unfit. Custody (*guarda y custodia)* of children is decided according to the children's best interests. Children under age 7 are normally left in the mother's charge. The court also determines visiting rights and schedules, and child support (*pensión alimentaria).*

Alimony and damages are determined by the presiding judge, whose decision is based on what is alleged and subsequently proven in court and on the financial status of the defendant. Assets acquired during the marriage are divided on an equally, except for those assets governed by a prenuptial property agreement (*separación de bienes).*

The cost of divorce in Venezuela is difficult to estimate, since there is no legal provision concerning professional fees. Even an uncontested divorce can be expensive.

DEATH

Death certificates are issued by the First Civil Authority of the parish or municipality where the death occurred and must be signed by the attending physician or coroner. Notification of death may be made by a relative or the funeral home in charge of the burial. The nationality of the deceased does not affect the procedure for obtaining a death certificate. An agent from the funeral home will help with all of the details and everything will be done at an amazing speed. This is the one instance in which Venezuelan paperwork moves quickly, since Venezuelan law requires all burials be done between 24 and 36 hours after death, except when special provisions have been made.

A certified copy of the death certificate can be obtained with a sheet of *papel sellado* and tax stamps for Bs.10 ($.11) at the appropriate First Civil Authority.

The death of a foreign citizen should be reported immediately to the deceased's embassy. All consulates have officers on duty 24 hours a day who will advise callers on the steps to be taken. Subsequently, an official report of the death will be made and the foreign death certificate will be issued.

If cremation is requested, the body must be embalmed and shipped to a country with cremation facilities, which Venezuela does not have. The nearest are in Puerto Rico or Haiti.

Relatives who wish the deceased to be buried in the country of origin must apply for a special permit from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, as well as from the coroner who issued the death certificate. By law, the remains must be embalmed and placed in a specially sealed casket. The consulate and funeral home will assist relatives in obtaining the necessary Venezuelan documents and in making transportation arrangements.

Shipping costs from Venezuela to the United States are high, but include coffin, preparation of the body and delivery to Maiquetía airport by funeral home, as well as air freight charges to the U.S. East Coast, where the body can be shipped to other parts of the United States.

(For funeral home listings, see "Yellow Pages," on page 445.)

WILLS

Generally, a will executed outside Venezuela is recognized under Venezuelan law as long as it is signed before a notary public or similar authority. The notary's signature must also be legalized by the Venezuelan consul with jurisdiction in the area. Failure to observe these formalities will result in the non-recognition of the testator's wishes by Venezuelan authorities and the testator will be deemed to have died intestate insofar as Venezuela is concerned.

It should also be noted that Venezuelan law protects the so-called "forced heirs," namely, the spouse and children, who cannot be completely disinherited. Despite the express provisions of the will, they are entitled to receive at least one-half the share that they would have received in the event of intestacy.

ESTATE TAXES

When there is a death within Venezuelan territory that results in the transfer of property rights within the country, or where personal property located abroad is transferred to persons living in Venezuela, the estate is considered to have been opened in Venezuela and is therefore taxable under local law. The amount of tax due is determined by the value of the

estate and the relationship between the deceased and his heirs.

An estate tax return must be filed with the Inheritance Tax Department of the Ministry of Finance. This declaration must be signed by an attorney and filed within three months of the death, although this period is extended to six months if any heirs are living abroad at the time of death. Normally there is no difficulty in obtaining the extension.

The property that the deceased used as living quarters is exempt from inheritance tax, provided it is passed on to the descendants, spouse, parents or adoptive offspring for the same purpose.

The period for the tax assessment is subject to delay because any real property included in the estate must first be appraised. Nevertheless, once the declaration is filed, the heirs may travel freely.

Until the inheritance tax is paid, neither the personal nor the real property making up the estate may be sold. However, Venezuelan law stipulates that special authorization to draw on the estate may be obtained as long as a cashier's check is presented to the tax department to act as a guarantee on taxes which subsequently may be due.

NATURALIZATION

Any foreigner who contemplates becoming a naturalized Venezuelan citizen should first check with his embassy or consulate to determine how such a move would jeopardize his right to retain citizenship of his country of birth.

The *declaración de voluntad de ser venezolano* form should be obtained from the Dirección Nacional de Identificación y Extranjería, Edif. Identificación (DIEX), Plaza Miranda, El Silencio (Tel.: 483.3433). The petition, drawn up on *papel sellado* and notarized, should include the applicant's name, age, place of birth, address, how and when he entered Venezuela and length of residence in the country. It must be accompanied by a letter from the applicant's employer; certification of residence from the municipality where the applicant resides, or a *certificado de domicilio*; two photos full-face, passport size; a resident visa in a valid passport, provided Venezuela maintains diplomatic relations with the country that issued the passport, since the absence of diplomatic relations between the countries may result in complications; a valid identity card or *cédula* and photocopy; evidence of having lived in Venezuela for at least 10 years; and Bs.500 ($5.49) in fiscal stamps.

Those who have been in the country for between five and 10 years are required to take an examination in Spanish language and in the history, geography and the social, moral and civic characteristics of Venezuela, which is administered by the Department of Equivalencias, Reválidas y Nacionalidad of the Ministry of Education. This requirement is waived for those over 50 years of age.

Foreign women married to Venezuelans must include a photocopy of their husband's *cédula* and a certified copy of the *partida de matrimonio* or marriage certificate with their application. Usually they are not asked to take the citizenship exam.

However, under current naturalization laws, foreign men married to Venezuelan woman may not receive Venezuelan citizenship in this way. They must comply with all of the general requirements for naturalization.

(For information on visas, see "Documentation," page 42.)

FIREARMS

Foreigners are not allowed to carry firearms unless they already possessed a permit on April 15, 1981, but they may apply for permits to keep handguns within their homes for protection.

Handguns and ammunition can only be purchased legally through the Venezuelan government's arms and munitions agency, Compañía Anónima Venezolana de Industrias Militares (CAVIM). Applications for a permit to keep a pistol or revolver at home, the *permiso de tenencia de arma*, can be obtained from the Ministerio de Relaciones Interiores, Dirección de Armas y Explosivos, Edif. Bolero, Esquina Bolero in Caracas, (Tel.: 83.2312/1341).

Foreigners who possessed permits to carry guns, known as *porte de arma*, before the law changed in 1981 are allowed to continue carrying pistols or revolvers with valid permits, which must be renewed annually.

Under Venezuelan law, private individuals are only permitted to own and/or carry revolvers up to .38 caliber and automatic pistols up to .32 caliber. Firearms beyond the allowable calibers are considered "weapons of war," and are restricted to the Venezuelan armed forces, police and security forces.

EMPLOYMENT FOR FOREIGNERS

Everyone working in Venezuela is covered by the Ley Orgánica del Trabajo. This governs working hours, seniority or *antigüedad*, vacation pay and other benefits, such as paid maternity leave and child care subsidies. Some benefits cannot be reduced by contract. For example, companies are obliged to give employees an annual bonus in the form of profit-sharing, or *utilidades*, at Christmas. They are also obliged to give employees at least one month's severance pay, or *prestaciones*, whose sum depends on the length of employment. However, if the employee is unjustly fired, he is entitled to receive double *prestaciones*.

Salaries, calculated on a monthly basis with additional vacation pay, are normally paid twice a month - on the 15th and 30th. Many times, the sum is directly deposited into the employee's bank account. Nevertheless, there are always long lines at banks on payday.

Any foreigner considering an offer of employment in Venezuela is strongly advised to visit the country first, accompanied by the spouse, if possible. A reconnaissance trip is recommended not only to weigh the pros and cons of the job in question, but also to get a clearer picture of what life in Venezuela would be like for the worker and his family. This is especially important for those who have never lived abroad or have no previous experience in Latin America. Among the factors to examine are housing, schooling, transportation and recreational options.

Foreigners who wish to work in Venezuela need to have either a transient or resident visa. Those entering the country on a tourist visa are forbidden by law from engaging in commercial activity or from seeking employment. Because of the difficulties and length of time involved in obtaining work visas, many people begin working without having the proper documentation, though it is not recommended.

For a company to obtain a transient or work visa for a prospective employee, the necessity of employing a foreigner must be justified to the Labor Ministry and to the Dirección Nacional de Identificación y Extranjería (DIEX), an office of the Ministry of the Interior. The Ministry authorizes the issue of transient visas to the foreign employee and his family. Authorization

is sent to the Venezuelan consulate abroad, which is indicated by the employee, who will pick up the visa at the consulate. **(For visa information, see "Documentation," Page 42.)**

Under current law, 90 percent of employees and 80 percent of the local payroll must be Venezuelan, thus limiting the number of foreign hires. Certain positions such as head of industrial relations, head of personnel and foremen must be Venezuelan citizens. The Ley Orgánica del Trabajo provides for exceptions, and should be consulted by the company lawyer when justifying the need for foreign hires to immigration authorities.

Professionals such as engineers and physicians who expect to practice in Venezuela may need to seek revalidation of their foreign degrees before setting up shop. There are a number of steps in this complicated and time-consuming process. If revalidation is necessary, the process should be started before leaving for Venezuela. **(For higher education information, see "Universities," Page 158.)**

Although a job move to Venezuela often opens up career opportunities for one spouse, the other, accustomed to the job market back home, may not be so fortunate. Language can be a big drawback, since fluency in Spanish is required for many, though not all, jobs. However, it is best to look at this situation as with any other job transfer: Venezuela is just another job market that like anywhere else in the world has its limitations and advantages. Often the way to find a job is through personal contacts. In Caracas, there are also a number of executive search consultants and a larger number of employment agencies, many of whom have personnel who speak English.

One of the biggest demands is for native English speakers to teach classes, and it is relatively easy to get a job doing so, regardless of previous experience. The country's need for native speakers of other languages is also great. Other options include positions as computer consultants, reporters, editors, interior decorators, personnel consultants, real estate agents, secretaries, travel agents, university professors and in all levels of management. Many multinational companies have specific needs for native English speakers as well.

It is tempting, but not wise, however, to translate local salaries into dollars. They are fixed with the local economy and are relatively low in comparison with similar jobs in the United States and Europe.

For those spouses who consider their relocation an opportunity to take a break from paid work, there are many voluntary organizations in search of energy and talent, such as orphanages and social service organizations. Some groups, like the Venezuelan Association of American University Women (VAAUW) for example, will provide volunteers with a letter verifying their experience for use in the job market.

THE POLICE

All Venezuelan police carry firearms. Anyone stopped by a police officer should remain calm and obey instructions. No police agent has the right to withhold a detainee's identification papers, such as his *cédula* or passport. However, a driver's license can be taken for up to three days in the case of a traffic infraction, with a traffic ticket given in return. Upon payment of the fine, the license is returned.

The emergency number 169 will contact the local Policía Metropolitana officers; there are direct numbers for each neighborhood. The Alcaldía of Baruta has its own police force, which can be called directly at 941.3097.

POLICE ISSUES

DNA FINGERPRINTING

The various police forces have their own laboratories that handle most technical issues. DNA fingerprinting for evidence in murder, rape and paternity/maternity cases can be performed by the Centro Medicina Experimental, Laboratorio de Genética Humana, Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas (IVIC), Altos de Pipe, Km 11 Carretera Panamericana (Tel.: 50.1111).

RAPE/SEXUAL ASSAULT

The closest thing in Caracas to a rape crisis center is the Asociación Venezolana para una Educación Sexual Alternativa (AVESA). Its offices are at Quinta AVESA, Avda. Anauco and Avda. Roraima, San Bernardino (Tel.: 51.8081). Office hours are 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Services offered include psychological, legal, and medical counseling in the case of rape or other forms of sexual assault and abuse, as well as educational and medical services related to birth control and reproductive rights. Charges for services are on a sliding fee scale to be within reach of all economic levels.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

ON GUARD - Police patrol the streets of Venezuela.

THEFT

Anyone who has been robbed should go to the nearest PTJ office to report the crime. The officer on duty will write up an *expediente de denuncia*, which should be checked carefully as it will be used for legal purposes and can not be altered later. The wording on the report must be chosen with care for insurance purposes. For example, a house robbed by rioters and reported as affected by riots may not be covered by insurance, if the word "robbery" does not appear on the written report.

The person reporting the crime will be given a yellow copy of the *constancia de denuncia*, which describes the list of stolen articles: In the case of a lost wallet, every missing article and credit card needs to be listed.

Stolen cars should be reported to a separate office of the PTJ in El Rosal (Tel.: 31.4120, 261.3009/4384).

VENEZUELAN POLICE FORCES

NAME	TYPE	UNIFORM	TELEPHONE
City police Policía Metropolitana (PM)	Caracas city police	Blue	169 21.6333/0713 34.2751/9578 81.5872/5879
Baruta municipal police	In Alcaldía of Baruta	Blue	169 941.3097/5197
National police Policía Técnica Judicial (PTJ)	Crime-fighting, patrolling. They handle more serious types of crime: kidnapping, rape, murder, robbery, car theft, suspected bombs, snipers, etc.	No specific uniform	160 571.3533
Policía de Tránsito	These traffic police issue speeding tickets and order cars towed away for policy infractions.	Brown	167
Guardia Nacional	National Guard, becoming increasingly involved in inner city patrolling and as a backup force for the PM and PTJ.	Helmets, olive-green fatigues	168 41.5552/6610
DISIP	Political security	Black	165 661.7855

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

INCOME TAXES

The following information is applicable only to the simplest cases and is not meant to be used as a guide by individuals or businesses with special tax problems. Competent professional advice should be sought by any person or company with specific questions on these taxes.

VENEZUELAN TAXES

Generally, residents and non-residents are subject to income taxes calculated on income earned within Venezuela, based on the following progressive rate:

Tax Rate Schedule for Individuals

Net Income up to Bs.:	Multiply by:	Then subtract:
450,000	not taxed	
1,000,000	10%	45,000
1,500,000	12.5%	70,000
2,000,000	15%	107,500
2,500,000	18%	167,500
3,375,000	21.5%	255,000
4,250,000	25.5%	390,000
Greater than 4,250,000	30%	581,250

Non-residents are persons physically present in Venezuela for 180 days or less during a tax year. These people are taxed on gross income at flat rates as follows: salaries and other employee income, 25 percent; professional fees of self-employed individuals, 30 percent; other types of earnings, 20 percent.

After living in Venezuela for 180 days during a calendar year, tax residence is established. Thereafter, the person is taxed as a resident in accordance with the tax rate schedule for individuals and is entitled to applicable deductions, tax credits and exemptions.

Until tax residence is established, withholding tax is 20 percent. Thus a person arriving, say, in September, will have tax withheld at 20 percent of his salary for the period from September to December. In the following year, the withholding will be at 20 percent until the person has completed 180 days in the country in that year (June 30). Afterwards, the monthly withholding tax will be adjusted, taking into account that the person will be taxed as a resident for the entire year (generally at lower rates) and offsetting the higher withholding during the first six months. If the tax withheld exceeds the liability determined in the tax return, the excess is generally applied to the next year's tax return to reduce liability for that year. In practice, refunds are rarely obtained, particularly if the amount is large.

Individuals with a net annual income greater than Bs.450,000 ($4,945.05) or gross income greater than Bs.500,000 ($5,494.51) must file an annual tax return. The following personal expenses are deductible: social security payments; interest paid on loans for home purchase or improvement; rent paid for accommodation; automobile repair; medical, dental, hospi-

talization, and life insurance premiums and expenses incurred in Venezuela (including prescriptions); certain donations; payment of state and municipal taxes; and telephone, electricity, water supply, and garbage collection expenses. There is no limit to these expenses. Also, there is a special unlimited personal deduction equivalent to 25 percent of the fees paid for professional services received by the taxpayer.

Calendar-year tax returns must be filed before the March 31 deadline with the Finance Ministry. The nearest office can be found in the telephone book under Gobierno Nacional, Ministerio de Hacienda, Tesoreria Nacional, Administración del Impuesto Sobre La Renta. Office hours generally are from 8:00 a.m. - noon and from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. During the last month of the tax filing season, temporary offices are set up in various locations throughout Caracas.

TAX FORMS AND FILING PROCEDURES

As in the United States, Venezuelan taxpayers need to use a variety of forms. In the simplest case of a salaried employee, the procedure is as follows: Employers each year provide employees with an AR-1 form, used by the employer and the government to determine how much tax should be withheld from each paycheck. The employee taxpayer is required to estimate annual income and deductions, such as rent, interest on mortgages, some insurance premiums, medical, dental and other expenses. Once the taxpayer makes this estimate, the employer determines how much tax should be withheld from his or her paycheck. The full name of the form is Relación a los Efectos de la Determinación del Porcentaje de Retención.

Before Feb. 15, the employer is obliged to give employees a statement of monthly earnings that also shows the amount of tax withheld. This form has two sides: the side describing remuneration and withholding tax is marked AR-C, *comprobante de retención*; the other side of this multi-copy form is marked D-207, *declaración de rentas* and is the basic tax return used for computing tax on salaries, and for filing with the Finance Ministry.

The separate form utilized for listing deductions or *desgravámenes* is A-308. Medical receipts and those for professional services must be attached to this form.

Once deductions have been itemized on Form A-308, taxpayers compute their final taxes on the D-207 declaration. If no money is owed the government, taxpayers simply file the form at an official reception agency and keep a stamped portion of the declaration as a receipt.

If taxes are owed, taxpayers compute how much they owe the government on form D-207, fill in an *autoliquidación* form (AL-01), and make their payments at an authorized bank. Stamped copies of the AL-01 form become the taxpayer's receipts. Once the tax is paid, the pink copy of the AL-01 is attached to the tax declaration (D-207) and filed at one of the reception centers. The white copy of AL-01 should be safeguarded by the taxpayer.

Payment can be made in up to three installments. In all cases, the first or only payment must be made before presentation of the final tax return. A second payment is due in 48 days and a third must be paid 90 days after the first payment.

The tax code provides for fines of Bs.10,000 ($109.89) to Bs.200,000 ($2,197.82) plus interest at bank loan rates - currently at about 50 percent - plus an additional 30 percent, for non-compliance with the tax law.

U.S. TAXES

U.S. citizens living abroad are required to file U.S. income tax returns if they earn more than a given amount, even if their earned income is exempt from U.S. tax. Resident aliens

(those with green cards) should file income tax returns regardless of income if they are working or living outside the United States but wish to retain their status.

U.S. TAX RATES

Filing status	1992 gross income
Single:	
Under 65	$5,900
65 or older	$6,800
Head of household:	
Under 65	$7,550
65 or older	$8,450
Married filing joint return:	
Both spouses under 65	$10,600
One spouse 65 or over	$11,300
Both spouses 65 or older	$12,000
Married filing separate return:	
All - regardless of age	$2,300
Qualifying widow/er with dependent child:	
Under 65	$8,300
65 or older	$9,000

U.S. citizens and resident aliens living abroad are taxed on worldwide income, but may be eligible to exclude up to $70,000 (Bs.6,370,000) of earned income and deduct certain foreign housing costs. To claim these exemptions (Foreign Earned Income Exclusion, Form 2555 or 2555-EZ), they should have foreign earned income; be U.S. citizens and bona fide residents of a foreign country for an uninterrupted period that includes an entire tax year or be physically out of the United States for at least 300 full days during any period of 12 consecutive months; and file the tax return no later than one year after the due date.

Failure to file a timely return can result in loss of the $70,000 (Bs.6,370,000) exclusion and result in penalties and interest payments. Resident aliens must be physically outside the United States for at least 330 full days during any period of 12 consecutive months.

Venezuelan income and social security taxes can be used to offset U.S. taxes (Foreign Tax Credit, Form 1116). The foreign taxes can be taken as a credit or as an itemized deduction. Tax credits cannot be claimed for foreign taxes paid on foreign earned income that is excluded under the $70,000 (Bs.6,370,000) general exclusion. If the foreign wages exceed the exclusion amount, credit can only be taken for the foreign taxes not allocated to the excluded income.

Certain itemized deductions further reduce foreign tax. However, the rules for calculating the credit are complicated and it is advisable to consult a tax expert.

U.S. citizens and resident aliens who become officers or directors of a foreign corporation, of which at least 5 percent or more of the stock is owned by a U.S. citizen, must file Information Return 5471.

Foreign corporations engaged in U.S. business and U.S. corporations "controlled" by a foreign person generally are required to file Information Return 5472 reporting certain transactions with related corporations. A corporation is considered controlled by a foreign individual, partnership, corporation or trust when that person owns 50 percent of voting power or 50 percent of the value of outstanding stock of the corporation.

The Internal Revenue Service has a staffed office in the U.S. Embassy in Caracas that has tax forms, including a supplementary package for overseas filers of form 1040, (Tel.: 285.4641).

A U.S. citizen or resident alien who has his tax residence outside the United States on the due date of the return is granted an automatic two-month extension in filing the return. However, the taxpayer must pay interest on any tax due on the return from the regular due date to the date the tax is paid.

How are you getting along in Spanish?

Living in another country isn´t easy. We know, we´ve been there.

"This course puts everything into place"
David Waugh, England
Biologist, Bioma

"Of great benefit in my work situation"
Yves Hamard, France
Systems Engineer, Schlumberger-Surenco

"The home-stay feature makes the course twice as effective"
Frank Brindle, New Zealand
Petroleum Engineer, Schlumberger

"Right on target"
Pieter J. Van Der Pols, Curaçao
Legal Advisor, Curaçao International Trust Company

"I saw amazing results in just one week!"
Catherine Healy, Washington, D.C.
National Geographic's Traveller Magazine

The Language Workshop

Calle Garcilazo, Centro Polo I, Torre B, Oficina 36, Colinas de Bello Monte, Caracas.
Telfs: 752 3218 / 2861 / 4584 - Fax: 752 6973

An unfamiliar culture with different customs and a new language is a true challenge for anyone.

Ever since 1980 the Workshop has worked with executives in over 90 multinationals helping them get acquainted with Venezuela and the language spoken here. We can do the same for you.

What does the Workshop offer?
- Spanish and English language training.
- Cultural adaptation and orientation.
- Super intensive language courses - For urgent needs (includes lunches, outing with instructors to places of historical, cultural interest).
- Orientation to the learning of a foreign language.
- Translation and interpreting services in many languages.

Why is the Workshop better than the rest?
- Direct and functional approach to language instruction.
- Target language spoken from the outset.
- Practical (useful) words and expressions taught through dialogues.
- Well-trained and experienced teaching staff.

How are the courses set up ?
- Student's level determined in order to start with appropriate material.
- Classes arranged at most convenient time and place for student (office, home, company, etc).
- Courses tailored to specific needs (professional area, etc).
- Student's learning style taken into account.

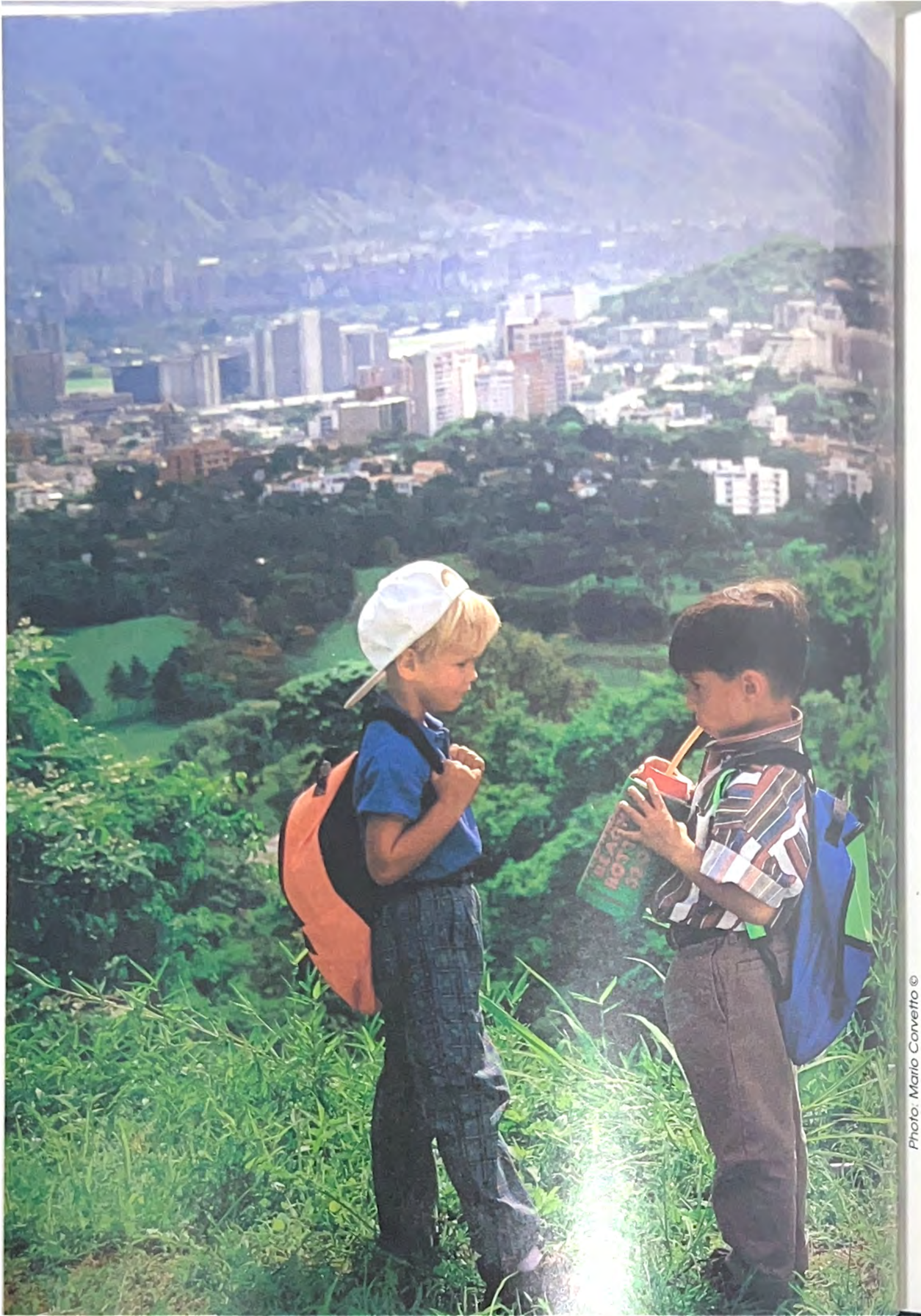


Photo: Mario Convetto ©

HEAD ON - Having a chat atop one of the many hills in the Caracas valley, which overlook the city.

CHAPTER IX

COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER SERVICES

PUBLICATIONS

Venezuela has a wide selection of newspapers, magazines and newsletters. Newspapers include quality broadsheets, good tabloids and the sensationalist popular press. Magazines cover a spectrum of special interests, including politics, economics, marketing, sports, tourism, gossip and glamor. The country has a good regional press outside Caracas as well.

There are a number of popular Venezuelan magazines, including Venezuelan economic and finance magazines like Dinero, Producto, Poder, Número and Gerente as well as general-interest publications like Exceso, Zeta, Elite and Bohemia - for keeping abreast of Venezuelan news and the people who make it. There are also a host of Spanish-language imports from Europe and the rest of Latin America.

English-language books are available throughout Venezuela, though at a price. Many of the current best-sellers are available in Spanish translations.

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS

The Daily Journal

A popular source of information for the English-speaking community of Venezuela, The Daily Journal provides coverage of local news, social and cultural items, human-interest stories, economic news, Associated Press and Reuters international wire service articles, reprints from leading U.S. and European newspapers, sports, comics, TV listings, and syndicated columns. It also has a classified section with advertisements for services, jobs wanted, jobs offered, real estate, club shares and second-hand bargains. (For classified ads., Tel.: 562.1627). The Daily Journal, located at Avda. Fuerzas Armadas con San Román, is available at selected newsstands and bookstores. Home and office delivery are available as well (Tel.: 562.1122, Ext 246, from 8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.).

Business Venezuela

Venezuela's only English-language magazine, Business Venezuela, is published monthly by the Venezuelan-American Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VenAmCham), and it is editorially independent. The magazine features a monthly economic report, plus incisive

articles on national and international issues facing business executives in Venezuela. Valuable analyses of the economy, the oil industry, the financial markets and government policies and regulations are also provided. Business Venezuela is distributed to all VenAmCham members, and is available to the general public at some bookstores, at newsstands, or by subscription (Tel.: 263.0833). The offices are in Torre Credival, Piso 10, 2da. Avda. de Campo Alegre, Campo Alegre.

VenEconomy

Provided in both monthly and weekly formats, this insider's guide to the local economy is available in both English and Spanish versions, by subscription only (Tel.: 762.6164). The offices are at Edif. Gran Sabana, Blvd. de Sabana Grande.

Other Periodicals

American and English newspapers and magazines, such as Time and Newsweek, are generally available on the newsstands of the larger Caracas hotels and in select bookstores.

COMPUTER NEWS SERVICES

Latin American Newsline

Latin American Newsline is available as a weekly, Spanish-language or as a bi-weekly, English-language summary of news from all of Latin America. It is available in print or by electronic mail from the publishers of NotiExpress (Tel.: 268.2644, 34.1988).

NotiExpress

NotiExpress is a daily, Spanish-language summary of the headlines and main stories in the Caracas press, with offices located at Torre Beta, Oficina 308, Calle Los Laboratorios, Los Ruices. It is available in print or by electronic mail (Tel.: 238.2644, 34.1988).

SPANISH-LANGUAGE PUBLICATONS

Economía Hoy

Originally an economy-oriented newspaper that also focuses on national and international political issues and events, this pink-sheeted newspaper has evolved into a more general-interest publication, with an emphasis on the media. Economía Hoy also carries foreign reprints and a weekly supplement of the London-based Guardian newspaper in its Sunday edition, which is also available all week until supplies run out. Economía Hoy offices are at Alcabala a Urapal. (To place a classified ad, Tel.: 571.5798.)

El Diario de Caracas

A colorful, well-designed tabloid, El Diario, on Avda. Principal de Boleita Norte, has several well-written editorial columns. The simple framework of the newspaper, in addition to its straightforward reporting, makes it a useful tool for improving one's Spanish. (To place a classified ad, Tel.: 238.1722.)

El Globo

El Globo is a tabloid-format daily that has captured the attention of a new reading public with its banner headlines and photo layouts. Noted for its liberal slant and longer, more thoughtful pieces, the paper has become a favorite among university students. The office is

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

MEDIA BLITZ - One of Los Palos Grandes' kioskos prepares to close up shop for the day.

located on Avda Principal de Maripérez, Transversal Colón. (To place a classified ad, Tel.: 576.4111.)

El Mundo

El Mundo is the country's oldest afternoon daily, and a Venezuelan institution, reporting scandals on the front page, photos of bloody assualts and other police news. Its offices are at Torre La Prensa, Plaza Panteón. Its cartoons are a worthy feature. (To place a classified ad, Tel.: 81.4931.)

El Nacional

The daily with the largest circulation in Caracas, this paper, at Puente Nuevo a Puente Escondido, is generally perceived as having a more liberal editorial slant than El Universal. The economic reporting is good, but the paper's main strengths are international affairs, culture and articles of sociological and ecological interest. (To place a classified ad, Tel.: 408.3111.)

El Nuevo País

El Nuevo País, a tabloid, concentrates on political scandalmongering and investigative reporting in a recently revamped style. Its offices are located at Pinto a Santa Rosalía. (To place a classified ad, Tel.: 541.5211.)

El Universal

One of the country's best daily newspapers, El Universal's four-section format gives

in-depth coverage of national and international news, plus sports and cultural affairs. Although its editorial policy is considered politically conservative, the paper has an outspoken political columnist and publishes a satirical supplement. Its classified advertisements are the most extensive in the business. El Universal offices are on Avda. Urdaneta, Esquina de Animas. (To place a classified ad, Tel.: 563.7511.)

Reporte

Reporte is a tabloid, economy-oriented daily newspaper that combines national and international economic news with general news coverage. The paper recently was relaunched in a green paper format and sports a weekly, eight-page Colombian business supplement. Its offices are located on Avda. Universidad, Pedrera a Marcos Parra. (To place a classified ad, Tel.: 481.7441.)

Ultimas Noticias

A thick tabloid with a strong national emphasis, Ultimas Noticias has a lively journalistic, if somewhat sensationalistic, style. Its cheap shots and rough look have made it a favorite among Venezuela's lower classes. (To place a classified ad, Tel. 81.4931.) The paper's offices are in Torre de la Prensa, Plaza Panteón.

REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS

Maracaibo

The principal local newspapers are the long-standing Panorama in Torre Bandagro, PB, No. 5 y 6, Esquina de Jesuítas (Tel.: 86.2222, 22.4077); La Columna, a relatively new entry into the scene that is quite favorably viewed, and is situated in Edif. Iberia, Piso 3, Avda. Urdaneta (Tel.: 22.7851/9746); and the 30-year old Critica in Torre Credival, 2nd Avda. de Campo Alegre (Tel.: 22.8766).

Valencia

El Carabobeño in Edif. Carabobeño, Avda. Soublette, No. 99-60 (Tel.: 57.2671) is a long-standing and well respected daily with local, national and international coverage. The entertainment page on Fridays list theater, galleries, restaurants and museums. The tabloid daily NotiTarde (Tel.: 57.0211) focuses on regional news with sections not only on Valencia, but pages dedicated to Cojedes and Yaracuy. Its offices are in Torre 4, Avda. Montes de Oca, No. 105-60. El Espectador (Tel.: 21.9112) is a relatively new paper on the scene focusing primarily on local coverage. The offices are in Avda. Bolívar Norte, Calle 151, Edif. Rio 88, La Alegria. El Diario de La Calle (Tel.: 57.4225) is more of a sensational tabloid-style daily, and is located on Calle Colombia at Avda. Briceño Méndez.

BOOKS

Having at hand a ready source of English-language books is often important for expatriates living away from home. Because books are so expensive to buy in Venezuela and are heavy to bring into the country, the Caracas libaries are something of a godsend. Many companies also have their own lending libraries, and there is a strong book exchange market among expatriate families.

For books in Spanish, which can be used to improve language skills, Venezuela offers a national reference library system.

LIBRARIES IN CARACAS

There are a number of English and Spanish libraries in the capital. Technical libraries also offer specialised books.

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LIBRARIES

British Council Library

This lending library is restricted to English literature, contemporary fiction and English-language teaching materials. There are also some British newspapers, magazines and general reference books available for consultation on the premises.
Torre La Noria, Piso 6
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.5222
Fax: 91.5943
Hours: 9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 3:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
Membership: Annual subscription of Bs.1,500 ($16.48), Bs.1,000 ($10.98) for students.

Caracas Circulating Library

This lending library has hardback books in English for children, teenagers and adults. It is weak on the Classics but keeps an updated best-seller section, with about 30 books added to the collection each month. There is also a small section with historical books on Venezuela. Particular titles can be requested, although the decision to purchase the volumes depends on the group's board of directors.

Older books are sold off on a continual basis for a nominal cost.
Calle 4, No. 3
Campo Alegre
Tel.: 32.4510
Hours: 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (Monday and Friday)
9:30 a.m. - noon (Saturday)
Membership: Initial deposit of Bs.500 ($5.49), which is refunded; yearly dues of Bs.100 ($1.09); monthly dues of Bs.500 ($5.49).

Centro Venezolano-American Library

The CVA has a bilingual lending library, with reference and research material in both English and Spanish. There is a selection of papers and periodicals and some novels. Reference facilities are open to the public, but only members can take books out on loan.
Edif. CVA
Avda. Principal
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 751.5511, 752.7511
Fax: 751.5279
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
Membership: Passport or *cédula* required; free membership application calls for the signature of two sponsors.

SPANISH-LANGUAGE LIBRARIES

Biblioteca Nacional

Venezuelan public libraries are organized through the Biblioteca Nacional. The central branch, including the official publications and rare books collections, is located between the corners of Bolsa and San Francisco on Avda. Universidad, across from the Capitolio Nacional (Tel.: 483.2058/2705). The branch at Foro Libertador (at the end of Avda. Panteón) houses the library's main collection of periodicals and journals (Tel.: 564.1714/1717).

Also at Foro Libertador in the Casa Santaella is the Caracas branch of the reference service called Servicio de Información a la Comunidad (SIC). This service is available in the main branch of the Biblioteca Nacional in each of the state capitals. The SIC can provide all sorts of information on emergency, medical, legal, and social services, public utilities, cultural centers, government agencies, schools and universities, documentation and other legal procedures, tourism, and just about anything else. In Caracas the service is available in person or over the phone Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Tel.: 564.1311, fax: 81.7919). The SIC publishes a handy booklet in Spanish called Pequeño Manual del Visitante for tourists that outlines public services in Caracas and at the airport in Maiquetía.

Venezuela has a complete network of public libraries. Individual city details can be obtained from the Instituto Autonomo Biblioteca Nacional, Edif. Macanao, Calle París at Calle Caroní, Las Mercedes, Caracas (Tel.: 993.7330, 91.1444).

Two public libraries in Caracas that offer interesting children's programs and activities include:

Biblioteca Raúl Leoni
Parque Santa Ana
Calle Carupano y Avda. Morao
El Cafetal
Tel.: 987.1998

Biblioteca Rómulo Betancourt
Parque del Este
Cerca de Avda. Francisco de Miranda entrada
Tel.: 284.1956

Another library with material in Spanish is:

Asociación Cultural Humboldt

The library has literature and reference works in Spanish and German. Periodicals, records, tapes and slide series are also available.
Avda. Jorge Washington y Calle Juan Germán Roscio
San Bernardino
Tel.: 52.6445/7634/9467
Fax: 52.5621
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 2:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Wednesday)
9:00 a.m. - noon, 2:00 p.m.- 6:30 p.m. (Thursday)
9:00 a.m. - noon (Friday)
Membership: There are no fees. A card is issued on presentation of passport or *cédula.*

TECHNICAL LIBRARIES

Caracas also boasts a number of technical libraries that provide a wide selection of reference material.

Centro Medico Docente La Trinidad (CMDLT)

This contains medical and scientific journals, books, and reference materials, as well as audiovisual recordings of conferences and meetings held at the CMDLT. There are photocopy and fax services. Library cards can be obtained for Bs.100 ($1.09) or donations for more may be made, making the donor a "friend of the library."
Avda. Intercomunal La Trinidad - El Hatillo
Edif. Manuel Antonio Pulido, Piso 3
La Trinidad
Tel.: 93.0757/3122
Fax: 93.6346
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Saturday)

Instituto de Estudios Superiores en Administración (IESA)

This collection includes national and international books and journals on administration, economics, finance, management and related subject areas. A number of databases are available including a business periodical index and social science index. For Bs.800 ($8.79) per quarter, residents may use the services.
Avda. IESA
San Bernardino
Tel.: 52.8712
Hours: IESA students and library "friends," 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m (Monday to Friday)
IESA students and library "friends," 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Saturday)
Public, noon - 9:00 p.m. (Friday)

Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas (IVIC)

This library contains scientific and technical books, journals, and reference materials in many fields from anthropology to zoology. Materials circulate only within the IVIC community, but photocopies of books and journals can be ordered for pick-up one or two days later. This library is worth a visit just for the long, silent uphill drive through the cloud forest after leaving the Carretera Panamericana.
Km. 11, Carretera Panamericana
Altos de Pipe
(Antes de San Antonio de Los Altos)
Tel.: 501.1111
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday)

LIBRARIES OUTSIDE CARACAS

MARACAIBO

A Spanish-language library in Maracaibo is the Biblioteca Baralt, on Avda. 3E con Calle 72, in front of Club Bella Vista (Tel.: 91.8481). Membership is free. The Centro Venezolano Americano del Zulia (CEVAZ) has its own library, containing 7,000 volumes, a wide selection of U.S. newspapers and magazines, and a recordings and video selection. The library also houses a reference section, which responds to individual consulations by phone or mail. Regularly-scheduled discussions, poetry nights and seminars are part of the library's schedule. Hours are from 9:00 a.m. - noon, 2:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday), and 9:00 a.m. - noon (Saturday). CEVAZ is on Calle 63, No. 3E-60, Bella Vista (Tel.:91.1880).

VALENCIA

Valencia has a movie library at the Nautilus gym in Carabobo, Calle 149, No. 100-65. It is open from 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and from 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday). Hours on Saturday are 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Biblioteca Pública Manuel Feo La Cruz is located behind the Teatro Municipal in the Centro on Calle Libertad at Avda. Carabobo, (Tel.: 52.553). It is open Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Saturday). This multi-storied structure is filled with and surrounded by art works created by Carabobo artists. It has a large children's section with a very active program of creative workshops and field trips.

BOOKSTORES IN CARACAS

English-language books can be found in the corner of many bookstores. However, several specialist bookstores in Caracas offer only English-language volumes, the best known of which is the American Bookstore in Altamira.

American Bookstore
Edif. Belveder
Avda. San Juan Bosco
Altamira
Tel.: 263.5455

English Book Shop
Centro Comercial Concresa
Local No. 315, Piso 1
Prados del Este
Tel.: 979.1908
Closed Monday mornings

Librería del Este
Edif. Galipán
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Entre Chacaíto y Chacao
Tel.: 951.2307/1705

Librería Las Mercedes
Edif. Automercado
Avda. Principal de las Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.9742

Librería Lectura
Centro Comercial Chacaíto
Sótano, Local 129
Chacaíto
Tel.: 952.0406/586

Sociedad Conservacionista Audubon de Venezuela
(Audubon Society Bookstore)
Centro Comercial Paseo Las Mercedes
"La Cuadra" Section
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 993.2525

Steele's Bookstore
Edif. María Auxiliadora
Calle Baruta
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 951.1828/1615

Winaday Bookstore
Centro Comercial Paseo Las Mercedes
Sector El Carrao
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.0546

Tamanaco Libros Técnicos
CCCT
Nivel C-2
Tel.: 261.3344/3335, 959.0016
Fax: 261.6407

For books in English and other foreign languages that cannot be located, contact Librería Unica at 752.5976, which specializes in importing books.

SECOND-HAND BOOKSTORES

Due to the constant devaluation of the bolívar, imported books are expensive to buy in Venezuela. Paperback or hardback, most books sell for twice their suggested U.S. retail price. Consequently, second-hand books are definitely "in." People who are leaving or simply find their bookshelves overcrowded often hold weekend book sales.

There is a good second-hand section to the American Bookstore and to the Caracas Lending Library. Other second-hand selections can be found at:

Children's Service League Second-hand Mini Bookstore
Quinta Jocary
Avda. Cristóbal Colón
La Trinidad
Tel.: 93.9923
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Saturday)
Greeting cards and video tapes are also available.

German Protestant Church Bookshop
(Congregación San Miguel)
Final de 4ta. Avda.
Altamira
Tel.: 263.8839/9395
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (Wednesday)
9:00 a.m. - noon (Saturday)
There are also second-hand books in German and Spanish as well as second-hand records.

St. Mary's Church Hall
Plaza Urape
San Román
Visitors can take as many as they want for a small per-book donation.

United Christian Church
Calle Arboleda
El Bosque
Tel.: 71.3901
Books and video tapes available during coffee hour after Sunday services.

BOOKSTORES OUTSIDE CARACAS

MARACAIBO
The following sell English-language books and magazines:

American Book Shop
Avda. 4 con Calle 77
Open 24 hours

Hotel del Lago InterContinental
Avda. El Milagro

Libreria Europa
Avda. 4, Centro Comercial Costa Verde

VALENCIA
English-language publications can be purchased from the Libraria Internacional on Avda. Bolívar.

PARTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY ON VENEZUELAN TOPICS

GUIDE BOOKS TO VENEZUELA

Guide to Venezuela

Written by Jan Bauman and Leni Young with Pat Glupker, Adela Lepingwell and Blackie Sparzani, the Guide to Venezuela is a hefty paperback travel guide that describes Venezuela's natural, historical and entertainment highlights in fine detail. A treasure trove of information on where to go, how to get there, and what to see, the guide includes maps and travelogs on all regions of the republic. However, the English-language edition was last revised in 1987, with updated information available in a separate chapter, so much data, especially road maps and directions, is out of date. The book can be purchased in most bookstores and major hotels.

The Spanish-language edition, Guía de Venezuela, is sold in small volumes organized by regions: Volume I details Caracas, the Federal District, and the Litoral; Volume II deals with the states of Miranda, Aragua, and Carabobo; Volume III features the Orient (including the state of Nueva Esparta); and Volume IV (due out at the end of 1993) details Delta Amacuro, the Guayana region and the state of Amazonas. The books are available at Corpoven gas stations. Cost: Bs.500 ($5,49) each.

Insight Guide - Venezuela

This newly published guide written by experts within Venezuela gives a well-rounded view of the country. By section, the book deals with Venezuela's history, politics, culture, food, sport and wildlife. The travel section is particularly useful, in part due to hundreds of beautiful pictures scattered throughout. Cost: Bs.1,815 ($19.95).

Venezuela Alive

Written by Arnold Greenberg, this is one of the few general tour-guide books specifically written about Venezuela. Though easier to carry around, the book is not recommended since it has been found by users to be inaccurate and incomplete. Cost:$10.95 (Bs.996).

South American Handbook

Possibly the best travel information for Venezuela readily available in the United States and Europe is the chapter on Venezuela in the South American Handbook, published in the United States by Prentice Hall General Reference and in England by Trade & Travel Publications, Ltd. The book is not only detailed and practical, but provides information for the budget traveler as well. Cost: $40 (Bs.3,640).

Fodor's South America

Published by Fodor's Travel Publications, Inc., this book is aimed at an upscale crowd and paints the country with a broader stroke than do other books. To be updated in 1994. Cost: $35 (Bs.3,185).

FICTION

Autumn of the Patriarch, Gabriel García Márquez (1991)
Doña Barbara, Rómulo Gallegos (1948)
Eva Luna, Isabel Allende (1988)
Lost World, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1988)
The General in His Labyrinth, Gabriel García Márquez (1990)
Venezuelan Short Stories, Avila Editors (1992)

FLORA, FAUNA AND ECOLOGY

A Guide to the Birds of Venezuela, Rodolphe Meyer de Schauensee, and William H. Phelps, Jr. (1978)
Birding in Venezuela, Mary Lou Goodwin, published by the Audubon Society in Venezuela. (1992)
High Forest, William Beebe (1949)
In the Rainforest, Catherine Caufield (1991)
Orchids of Venezuela, three volumes, G.C.Dunsterville & L.A. Garay (1979)

FOOD

Buen Provecho, a bilingual cookbook was originially published by British Ladies Charities, but is currently available through the VAAUW **(See "Community Organizations," page 171.)** or at selected bookstores in Caracas. (1992)
Guía Gastrónomica de Caracas, Miro Popic (1993)

GENERAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL

Angels Four, David Nott (1972)
Canaima, Rómulo Gallegos (1988). Available through the Asociación Venezolano Americana de Amistad **(See "Community Organizations," page 171.)**

Churún Merú, Ruth Robertson (1975)
Venezuela, Daniel Hellinger (1991)
Venezuela, Edwin Lieuwen (1965)
Venezuela, J. Martz (1986)
Venezuela, Rosa Q. Mesa (1977)

HISTORY
Boca Grande: A Series of Historical Essays, Charles D. Gibson (1982)
Caudillo, a Portrait of Antonio Guzmán Blanco, George S. Wise (1951)
Germany's Vision of Empire in Venezuela, 1871-1914, Helger H. Herwig (1986)
Memories of Venezuela, by Alfredo Armas Alfonso. (1979)
People & Places in Colonial Venezuela, John V. Lombardi (1976)
The Caracas Company 1728-1784: Study in the History of Spanish Monopolistic Trade, Roland Dennis Hussey (1934)
The Colonial Elite of Caracas: Formation & Crisis, 1567-1767, Robert J. Ferry (1989)
The Conquest & Settlement of Venezuela, José de Oviedo y Banos (1987)
The Liberator, Augusto Mijares (1991)
The New Democracy in America: Travels of Francisco de Miranda in the United States, 1783-84, John S. Ezell(editor) (1963). Available through the Asociación Venezolano Americana de Amistad **(See "Community Organizations," page 171.)**
TOPO: The Story of a Scottish Colony near Caracas, 1825-27, Hans Rheinheimer (1988)
Venezuela Through Its History, William D. and Amy L. Marsland (1976)

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
In Trouble Again, Redmond O'Hanlon (1988)
The Fierce People, Napoleon Chagnon (1983)

POLITICS AND ECONOMY
Attitudes in Venezuela: Societal Cleavages & Political Opinion, Enrique A. Baloyra and John D. Martz (1979)
Christian Democracy in Venezuela, Donald L. Herman (1980)
Conflict & Political Change in Venezuela, Daniel H. Levine (1973)
Elections & Negotiation: The Nature of Democracy in Venezuela, Eduardo A. Talavera (1986)
Gómez, Tyrant of the Andes, Daniel J. Clinton (1936)
Hunger in a Land of Plenty, George Schuyler (1980)
Indictment of a Dictator: The Extradition & Trial of Marcos Pérez Jiménez, Judith Ewell (1981)
The Challenge of Venezuelan Democracy, José A. Gil Yepes (1981)
The Political Economy of Land: The State & Urban Development in Venezuela, Alan Gilbert and Patsy Healey (1985)
The Politics of Change in Venezuela, Frank Bonilla and Jose A. Silva-Michelena (1970/71)

The Road to OPEC: United States Relations with Venezuela, 1919-1976, Stephen G. Rabe (1982)
The Politics of Oil in Venezuela, Franklin Tugwell (1975)
Tutelary Pluralism: A Critical Approach to Venezuelan Democracy , Luis J. Oropeza (1983)
Update-Venezuela, Alison Lanier (1979)
Venezuela: A Century of Change, Judith Ewell (1984)
Venezuela: Politics in a Petroleum Republic, David E. Blank (1984)
Venezuela: The Search for Order, the Dream of Progress, John V. Lombardi (1982)
Venezuela & Its Ruler, N. Naranjo (1927)
Venezuela, the Democratic Experience, edited by John D. Martz and David J. Meyers (1986)
Venezuela's Voice for Democracy: Conversations & Correspondence with Rómulo Betancourt, Robert J. Alexander (1990)
Venezuela's Movimiento a Socialismo: from Guerrilla Defeat to Innovative Politics, Steve Ellner (1988)
Venezuelan Economic Development: A Politico-Economic Analysis, Loring Allen (1977)

CHILDRENS' BOOKS
Take a Trip to Venezuela (Take a Trip Series), Keith Lyee (1988)
Venezuela (Let's Visit Places & People of the World Series), Marion Morrison (1989)
Venezuela (Enchantment of the World Series) (1989)
Venezuela in Pictures (Visual Geography series), Lerner Publications (1991)
Designed for children, but not strictly speaking only for children, is the color book series including "Conoce Nuestras Aves," "Conoce Nuestros Peces," "Conoce Nuestros Insectos," and "Conoce Nuestros Mamíferos" (Meet our birds, fish, insects, and mammals). The series is published by Ediciones Ekarí with the Banco del Libro. These books feature basic information about selected members of the different animal groups living in Venezuela, with line illustrations.

SPANISH-LANGUAGE BOOKS
Armitano Press publishes a number of picture books in Spanish (and occasionally other languages including German and English). These are available in most larger bookstores and at the larger hotels in Caracas.

A highly recommended oral history series, Los Baqueanos, is published by Publicaciones El Pueblo (Tel.: 451.6596). Each of these small books is from the life of one person - including a fisherman, a truck driver, and a housewife - providing an intimate look into the lives of ordinary Venezuelans during the last 60 years.

TELEVISION

Venezuela has six main television channels:

Channel 2	Radio Caracas Televisión	(commercial)
Channel 4	Venevisión	(commercial)
Channel 5	Televisora Nacional	(government-owned)
Channel 8	Venezolana de Televisión	(government-owned)
Channel 10	Televen	(commercial)
Channel 12	Omnivisión	(commercial, pay-TV)

The growing number of parabolicas or satellite dishes on the roofs of apartment buildings is testimony to the growth of interest in international television. Although houses equipped with satellite dishes are not normally available on the rental market, many apartment buildings now offer this feature, enabling residents to receive public, commercial and cable channels transmitted from the United States. The Daily Journal carries a listing of satellite programming available in Caracas.

Cablevisión (Tel.: 201.9212-9221) is the local cable service that offers programming on several channels. A number of U.S.-based, English-language channels are included in the package, which changes from time to time. Installation of the cable for the 10 channels costs Bs.27,000 ($296.70), with charges of Bs.2,000 ($21.98) a month. Allow a month for service to be connected.

Omnivisión (Channel 12) was Venezuela's first venture into pay-TV. The entertainment package, put together with the help of cable networks Nickledeon and ESPN, combines feature films, U.S. soap operas and sports and locally produced news programs. To use the service, viewers need to install a decoder to unscramble the signal sent from the transmitter on Mount Avila. The installation fee is Bs.14,200 ($156.04), with monthly charges of Bs.3,300 ($36.26). More information can be obtained at 256.4644/4755.

Of the standard television channels, 2, 4, 8 and 10 offer many slightly dated U.S. television series, dubbed in Spanish, as well as locally produced prime-time *telenovelas* or soap operas, and musical, variety and comedy programs. These channels also offer morning news broadcasts, often followed by one-on-one interviews with leading Venezuelan personalities.

Channel 5 comes on the air at 1:00 p.m. (Saturday and Sunday at 11:00 a.m.) and features a range of educational and cultural programming as well as films.

Color and black-and-white television sets manufactured in the United States or under the U.S. system will function in Venezuela; European sets will not.

Videocassette recorders are common in many households. Videotapes can be bought in bookstores and many electronics stores have video sections. Both private and commercial video clubs are popular, and most commercial centers have outlets for the latter; members exchange cassettes or rent them from a communal library. More tapes are available in VHS than in Betamax format, though the latter is still widely popular.

Maracaibo

For local television in Maracaibo, Channel 11 Zulia (Tel. 51.1111/2732/2672) has a fairly good coverage of local news, cultural and human interest topics. Another channel is Zuliana de Televisión, Channel 30 (UHF), serving the east coast of the lake (Tel.: 065.41.2042). The programming basically consists of cartoons, documentaries and several series.

Valencia

NCTV, Channel 36, broadcasts from Valencia, but the programming is relatively weak, with old movies and coverage of local events.

RADIO

Pop, rock and disco dominate the Caracas air waves. Despite a government "one-for-one" ruling that for every foreign song played, a Venezuelan composition must be aired, the edict now seems to be largely ignored. As well as the cluttered AM band, there are now 14 stations broadcasting in stereo on FM, although they are rapidly multiplying.

For those seeking mellow music, Radio Nacional (medium wave 630kHz - 476 m) offers classical music; La Emisora Cultural (97.7 FM), offers classical music; jazz and discussion programs (occasionally in English). This FM station is supported by private donations from individuals and businesses, and has a limited number of commercial announcements. The monthly program guide is sent to members and is available free in selected book and record shops. Further information can be obtained from La Emisora Cultural, Apartado 3971 (Tel.: 782.9775/2031, fax: 978.4786).

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

The BBC World Service can be received here on a good short-wave radio. Current information on broadcasting wavelengths and programming schedules and a free copy of BBC London Calling, which gives full World Service program details, can be obtained from the British Council in Caracas (Piso 6, Torre La Noria, Las Mercedes, Tel.: 91.5222, fax: 91.5943).

Radio Nacional broadcasts a one-hour news program with 40 minutes in Spanish, followed by ten minutes in English, and ending with ten minutes in French, daily at 7:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m., 8:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. In Caracas, reception is best at the 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. broadcasts. The program is broadcast on short wave at 9,540 kHz - 31 m, and at 11,695 and 11, 850 kHz - 25 m.

Voice of America programs can be received on a number of medium and short wavelengths. Current information on broadcasting wavelengths and programming schedules can be obtained from the U.S. Information Service (Tel.: 285.3111/2222, fax: 285.1643) at the U.S. Embassy in Caracas.

TELEPHONE SERVICES

Formerly a government-owned monopoly, the telephone company CANTV was sold in 1991 to a multinational consortium headed by GTE. The new owners are struggling to cope with the effects of years of mismanagement and neglect, and while things are improving slowly, it will be some time before all subscribers have top-quality service. International communication by phone is often easier during lunch (noon - 2:00 p.m.) and outside normal work hours (after 6:00 p.m., or before 9:00 a.m.).

CANTV, or Compañía Anónima Nacional Teléfonos de Venezuela, is headquartered in Caracas at the Centro Nacional de Telecomunicaciones, Avda. Libertador (Tel.: 573.5487/5319, 500.7374).

In Maracaibo, offices are in the Centro Operativo Sabaneta, Avda. Principal (Tel.: 86.2522).

The offices in Valencia are at Centro Profesional El Camoruco, Avda. Bolívar, Piso 9 (Tel.: 42.4285).

Due to problems with obtaining and maintaining lines, more and more people are bypassing the system and buying or renting cellular phones. Cellular lines are available through MovilNet (Tel.: 993.2411/6422) or TelCel (Tel.: 201.8100).

There have been reported instances where bills have included charges for international calls not actually made. Bills should be carefully checked, and in the case of an erroneous call, CANTV should be contacted. However, the bill should still be paid in the first instance, or the phone company will disconnect the service.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Information on incorrectly listed, or new numbers (*transferencias*) ..... Tel.: 51.0144
Information (Caracas and national) ..... Tel.: 103
Long distance (national) ..... Tel.: 100
Long distance (international) ..... Tel.: 122
Cables (international) ..... Tel.: 81.8915
Telegrams ..... Tel.: 462.4329/4108/4283
Telephone repairs (7:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m., Monday to Saturday) ..... Tel.: 15
Telex (international) ..... Tel.: 41.8644, 959.0979
Time check ..... Tel.: 19

INTERNATIONAL CALLS

Not all telephones in Venezuela are yet incorporated into the International Long Distance Direct Dialing System (DDI). Direct international calls may be made only from those telephones whose numbers begin with certain digits. These are listed in the beginning of the white pages of the phone book. The international operator at 122 can give information on whether a certain phone has direct international dialing. Calls made from other telephones must be placed through the international operator.

Collect calls can be made between Venezuela and the United States. They can also be made from Canada, Brazil and most European countries.

When dialing direct, the first digits to be dialed should be 0-0. A click should follow the first 0 before the next one is dialed. The international dialing code should follow.

For calls originating abroad, Venezuela's international code number is 58. Caracas' city code is 2.

The countries listed on the following page may be dialed direct from those telephones which are incorporated in the DDI system.

GET YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO:
BUSINESS VENEZUELA
CALL 263.0833.

INTERNATIONAL DIALING CODES

Country	Code	Country	Code
Argentina	54	Italy	39
Aruba	5998	Jamaica	179
Australia	61	Japan	81
Austria	43	Liechtenstein	4175
Bahamas	182	Luxembourg	352
Barbados	173	Mexico	52
Belgium	32	Monaco	3393
Bermuda	178	New Zealand	64
Bonaire	5997	Nicaragua	505
Brazil	55	Norway	47
Canada	11	Panama	507
Chile	56	Peru	51
Colombia	57	Portugal	351
Costa Rica	506	Puerto Rico	508
Curaçao	5999	Saba	5994
Denmark	45	San Marino	39541
Dominican Republic	531	Singapore	65
Ecuador	593	Spain	34
Egypt	20	St. Kitts	162
El Salvador	503	St. Maarten	166
Finland	358	Sweden	46
France	33	Switzerland	41
Greece	30	Trinidad & Tobago	530
Guatemala	502	Unified Germany	49
Haiti	509	United Kingdom	44
Holland	31	United States	1
Honduras	504	Uruguay	598
Hong Kong	852	Vatican	396
Ireland	353	Virgin Islands	180
Israel	972	Yugoslavia	38

(For a more complete listing of international codes by city and for those of Venezuelan cities and towns, see "Appendix," Page 472.)

RATE STRUCTURE - INTERNATIONAL

Location	Normal	Reduced
North America:		
Canada	134	118
Mexico	300	272
United States	136	119
Central America:		
Panama	196	174
Rest of Central America	171	153
Caribbean:		
Cuba	196	174
Dominican Republic	196	174
Rest of Caribbean	187	168
South America:		
Argentina	278	250
Bolivia	239	215
Brazil	278	250
Chile	240	216
Colombia	171	154
Ecuador	171	154
Peru	172	155
Uruguay	278	250
Rest of South America	239	215
Europe:		
France, Greece, Switzerland	184	164
Italy & Vatican	276	251
Portugal	276	251
Spain	184	164
Rest of Europe	309	276
Rest of World:	309	309
INMARSAT:		
Atlantic	200	200
Indian	200	200
Pacific	200	200

(Rate in bolívars per minute)

OPERATOR SERVICES
Station-to-Station Calls
The same per-minute usage rates apply but with a minimum tariff of three minutes.

Person-to-Person Calls
The same per-minute usage rates apply but with a minimum tariff of three minutes and an extra charge of one minute.

Reduced Rate Schedules (Venezuelan time):
- Alaska, Canada, United States, Hawaii, the Caribbean and South America: Daily from 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m.
- Mexico, Panama, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Central America: Daily from 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 a.m.
- Europe: Daily from 7:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m.

OTHER COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

CABLES AND TELEGRAMS

The telegram service in Venezuela is notoriously inefficient and unreliable. Messages both entering and leaving the country have been known to arrive at their destination weeks - not days - later. A company's fax or telex or a private fax service available at many copy centers is safer and faster. Telegrams can no longer be sent by phone in Valencia but can be sent from Ipostel.

The following is a list of offices in Caracas where telegrams may be sent:

Zone	Address
Caracas-Central	Centro Simón Bolívar, Torre Norte, Piso 1
Carmelitas	Edif. Correo, Avda. Urdaneta, Esquina de Carmelitas
Chacao	Edif. Office Building, Avda. Francisco de Miranda
El Márques	Unicentro El Márques, Local 23
Petare	Edif. San Gerardo, Local 6, Calle Miranda
Prados del Este	Avda. Río de Oro y Calle Girasol
Sabana Grande	Edif. Cedíaz, P.B., Avda. Casanova

Cables can be sent by telephone through Ipostel, from 8.00 a.m. - 8.00 p.m. at:
International Cables: Tel.: 81.8915
Telegrams: Tel. 462.4329/4108/4283

TELEX
The telephone company CANTV has two conveniently located public telex offices:

Centro Simón Bolívar
Torre Sur-Nivel Avda. - Local 21
El Silencio
Telex: 27801
Tel.: 41.8644

Centro Comercial Ciudad Tamanaco
Nivel C-1, Chuao
Telex: 27705
Tel.: 959.0979
Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

POSTAL SERVICE

Unfortunately, the handling and processing of mail is subject to serious delays. This applies to letters both entering and leaving Venezuela, but the situation is far worse for incoming mail.

Letters between Venezuela and the United States or Europe can take anywhere from five days to five weeks to arrive. People with contacts traveling abroad often send important mail with them to be posted in the destination country. Since home delivery of mail is sporadic at best, many people find it more efficient to rent post boxes or apartados.

As well as the regular Ipostel service, for a few extra bolívars the international express service can be slightly quicker and more reliable. However, at other times, it can prove to be slower than the regular mail. Also available at post offices is the slightly more expensive Express Mail Service (EMS), which guarantees international delivery within 72 hours.

In an effort to improve service, in February 1993, Ipostel announced a program of installing mail boxes at strategic locations, such as major hotels and select pharmacies.

Postage in Venezuela is on a par with, or more expensive than, the United States. Rates are based on destination/distance and the weight of the letter or parcel. Letters sent within Venezuela cost Bs.24 ($.26). For postage outside the country, there are two different rates: one for North South, and Central America and the Caribbean; and the other for the rest of the world. A letter sent in the Americas costs Bs.80 ($.88) and a postcard costs Bs.45, ($.49) compared with Bs.100 ($1.10) for a letter elsewhere in the world, and Bs.50 ($.55) for a postcard. Aerogrammes can be sent anywhere in the world for Bs.60 ($.66).

PACKAGES

Packages and parcels have a way of disappearing without a trace. It is therefore strongly recommended that friends and relatives never try to send valuable gifts through the mail.

Packages of one pound or less go to the local branch post office, and occasionally will be delivered to the home. Usually, they will be held at the branch office for pickup after payment of a small charge for duty.

In Caracas, larger packages go to the central Customs Post Office at Caño Amarillo. It may take up to four weeks for notification of the package's arrival to be received. To pick up the

package, a *cédula* or passport is needed, and the number of fiscal stamps specified on the post card (these are also for sale in the office in Caño Amarillo) plus money to pay duty as determined by the customs agent.

The postal depot can be seen from the elevated Caño Amarillo Metro station stop. At the depot, stops at several windows are necessary before going to another building a block away to calculate the duty. A visit to the bank at the Capitolio station of the Metro is then needed to pay the bill before returning to claim the package. Generally speaking, picking up a package takes about two hours, and an estimated 10 people need to be consulted.

Packages mailed from Venezuela should be enclosed in solid, colored fabric and sewn shut to avoid pilferage.

The following is a list of some of the more conveniently located post offices in Caracas. Information on other offices can be obtained from Ipostel (Tel.: 462.4102).

Zone	Address
Altamira	Edif. San Antonio, Transversal 1, Plaza Sur de Altamira
Candelaria	Avda. Urdaneta, Frente Plaza Candelaria
Carmelitas	Avda. Urdaneta, esquina de Carmelitas
Chacao	Edif. Office Building, Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Chuao	Centro Comercial Ciudad Tamanaco (CCCT)
Colinas de Bello Monte	Edif. Bello Monte, Avda. Caroní
El Hatillo	Calle La Paz, 22
El Marqués	Unicentro El Marqués, Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Las Mercedes	Módulo Ipostel, Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Los Chaguaramos	Centro Comercial Los Chaguaramos, Local 3 y 4
Nueva Granada	Edif. Claribel, Avda. Nueva Granada
Parque Central	Edif. Mohedano, Nivel Bolívar, Parque Central, Avda. Lecuna
Petare	Edif. San Gerardo, Local 6, Calle Miranda
Plaza Venezuela	Torre Capriles, Centro Comercial Capriles
Prados del Este	Calle Río de Oro y Calle Girasol
Quinta Crespo	Calle 100 y Calle 200
Sabana Grande	Edif. Cedíaz, P.B., Avda. Casanova
San Martín	Centro Postal Caracas, Avda. José Angel Lamas

In Valencia, packages can be sent and received from the main office of Ipostel on Calle Colombia between Avda. Díaz Moreno and Montes de Oca (Tel.: 57.8015).

Mail and telegrams can be sent from Maracaibo at: Cañada Honda, Avda. 41 (Tel.:51.6748); Avda. Las Delicias at Calle 78 (Tel.: 51.7517) and Edif. Mica, Avda. Bella Vista at Avda. 8 (Tel.: 71.085).

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

MOTORBIKE MESSENGERS - A motorizado delivers mail downtown, circumventing the country's poor postal system.

PRIVATE COURIER SERVICES AND MESSENGERS

The delays in Venezuela's postal service have become so crippling that both individuals and businesses rely heavily on private mail couriers. Courier services between Venezuela and the United States offer clients post boxes for rent and handle most documents, personal letters, periodicals and packages. A 48-hour delivery is guaranteed.

Couriers specializing in domestic mail service are also prospering. Business executives use long-distance telephone calls and their own office telex and fax machines extensively, particularly for communication with Europe and other Latin America countries. Increasingly, people have fax machines in their homes for after-hours communication.

Within the city of Caracas, most companies send important letters by way of *motorizados*. These crash-helmeted, motorcycle-riding messengers zip through the traffic-clogged thoroughfares, often running lights and going the wrong way on one-way streets and driving on sidewalks. However, the mail gets through, at least when the sun shines.

Courier firms include:

DHL Fletes Aéreos, C.A.

Caracas:
Torre Credival, Piso 1
2da. Avda. de Campo Alegre
Campo Alegre
Tel.: 263.0211/2122

Maracaibo:
Edif. Mi Bohío, P.B.
Calle 77, 3-D-95
Tel.: 91.4425/6202

DHL Valencia:
Centro Comercial El Añil, Oficina 34
Avda. Andrés Eloy Blanco
Tel.: 22.1785, 21.9158

Jet International, C.A.
Multicentro Empresarial del Este
Edif. Miranda
Núcleo A, Piso 12, Oficina A-128
Avda. Libertador
Chacao
Tel.; 32.3048/8427

(For additional companies, see the "Yellow Pages," page 444.)

FINANCIAL SERVICES

BANKS

There is a wide range of banks and lending or investment institutions represented in Venezuela, many of which handle savings accounts, checking accounts, loans, mortgages, etc. Among the largest are Banco Consolidado, Banco de Maracaibo, Banco de Venezuela, Banco Latino, Banco Mercantil, Banco Provincial and Banco Unión.

Interest rates for savings accounts are high, currently hovering around the 50 percent mark. With inflation in the 30 percent annual range, this means that deposit accounts are attractive options. The chances of a devaluation seem reasonably remote, despite the sliding value of the bolívar. However, those wanting to borrow money see the opposite problem, with prohibitive lending rates of more than 60 percent. Dollar accounts can be opened here, but often at least $5,000 (Bs.455,000) is required as an initial deposit.

Credit cards are generally welcome in the hotels, shops and restaurants of Caracas. The most widely recognized are American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard, and Visa. Payment of charges made with credit cards issued in Venezuela must, by law, be made within 30 days of billing. This ruling does not apply to department store charge accounts which, with the exception of Maxy's, are virtually unknown in Venezuela.

Many bills can be paid by telephoning the bank and having the correct amount of money transferred to the appropriate account. It is recommended that important monthly invoices, such as the rent or the telephone bill, be handled in this way or directly and not by automatic bank transfers. Banks in Venezuela have an unfortunate reputation when it comes to standing orders on the transfer of money. More often than not, either the bank neglects to make the transfer or it transfers an incorrect amount. Incorrect information can also embarrass the account holder; checks have been known to bounce, despite ample funds covering them. Banks are also very particular about how checks are written; the smallest omission or change in signature may cause the check to be returned. Likewise, no corrections are allowed, or the check will not be accepted. Some banks (notably Banco de Crédito Venezolano) are real sticklers about the name on the check exactly matching the name on the *cédula*. This can be a problem for foreign women who do not take the Venezuelan form of married name which includes the maiden name.

Banks open their doors at 8:30 a.m., close for lunch at 11:30 a.m., and are open again between 2:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Most savings and loans houses (Entidades de Ahorro y Préstamo) and non-commercial institutions such as Confinanzas open at 9:00 a.m. and do not close their doors until 4:00 p.m. They are open Monday through Friday, except on numerous bank holidays set by the National Banking Council. Bank holidays, honored by commercial, savings, and mortgage institutions, as well as finance companies, usually differ from the

holiday schedule of public and private sector offices. Free wallet-sized calendars of bank holidays are available at most branches. Most banks now have automatic teller services with cash machines at many convenient locations.

MONEY CHANGING

Obtaining local currency in Venezuela can be a frustrating experience, despite the numerous banks and the money-changing houses, known as *casas de cambio*. Generally speaking, it is best to arrive in the country with U.S. dollars, because of Venezuela's strong links with the United States. Those wanting to change sterling can expect to face a very long-winded process. Many banks refuse to change this currency, either in cash or travelers' checks, although some money-changing houses will accept sterling.

Travelers checks, while safer, can be a liability because the *casas de cambio* will not change them unless they have the security numbers. Carrying both the checks and numbers together in Caracas can be dangerous. It is easier to bring only well-known varieties, notably American Express or Visa. Most banks only deal with one of these companies.

The *casas de cambio* are a good alternative to the endless bank lines for changing money, although their rates are not so favorable. They also tend to be open on Saturdays, while banks are closed. However, anyone wanting to change bolívars into dollars in a hurry in one of these establishments should be aware that sometimes it can be difficult to obtain foreign currency. Then, the only alternative is to change money at the airport, which is more expensive.

Photo: Mario Corvetto ©

CHAPTER X

LEISURE

CULTURE

To many, Venezuela conjures up images of beautiful beaches, tropical jungles and stunning beauty queens. All are relevant, for Venezuela has an extensive coastline, is home to the fecund Amazon jungle, and has spawned four Miss Universes and four Miss Worlds in the last 10 years. However, the country's cultural backbone is made up of much more; its 22 million people live in distinct regions so drastically different that each has spawned its own unique culture, each proudly calling itself Venezuelan.

Prior to World War II, Venezuela consisted of relatively isolated regions not linked by any viable means of communication or identity. The wild horsemen of the *llanos* region had little in common with the racially-mixed Criollos from Caracas or the indigenous tribes of the Orinoco region. Roads connecting the states were few, preventing extensive cultural exchange; yet the isolation only made the various regional traditions stronger. Everything changed in the 1920s, when the country's oil boom and post-war technological advances prompted the rapid growth of Caracas.

Given that the country's cultures were only united in modern times, attempting to define the typical Venezuelan is a difficult task. The nation's people have a rich mixture of African, Indian and European blood, all of which add spice to the typical Venezuelan identity, a fact shown in the beat of its music. The pounding of the African *tambores*, the rhythm of the Caribbean salsa and merengue, and the twanging of the four-stringed *cuatro* are all distinct cultural forms embraced as typically Venezuelan sounds.

Venezuelans seem to have been born dancing. At parties and family gatherings, even the youngest toddlers sway their hips and tap their toes with a natural sense of rhythm. In addition to Latin modern dance, other types of music and dance are traditionally associated with different areas of the country. Maracaibo is renowned as the birthplace of the *gaita*, a lively, percussion-based music associated predominantly with the Christmas season. One of its unique characteristics is the use of the *furruco*, an instrument that looks like a tall wooden drum with a pole attached to its inner membrane. When the pole is stroked, a distinctive, resonant sound reverberates. The music of the *tambores*, or African drums, is strong on the central and western coasts, the legacy of a large population of African slaves who were brought to work on the cacao plantations. In Los Llanos or the central plains, *música criolla* - Venezuela's version of country music - is heard everywhere. Musicians typically play an *arpa* or small harp, maracas, *cuatro* and guitar. The foot-stomping *joropo* is the dance performed to this music.

WATER BABIES - Children take time out for a dip.

Dancing plays a key role in nearly all the country's traditional folkloric and religious festivals. Most of the ritual dances are rooted in the ancient customs of the colonizers who came from Europe and Africa, along with some of the indigenous cultures.

The Venezuelan mindset reflects its own *mestizo* past, and can best be described as a variation on the traditional Latin attitude towards life. Venezuelans live life to the fullest, with beach-going, all-night partying and regular climbs up the Avila considered elements of a well-rounded lifestyle. People hold a typically Latin attitude toward time as well; the task at hand is more important than any appointment in an hour or two, and consequently, tardiness is the norm. So is the two-hour lunch break in the middle of the day, no matter that the city is jammed with fast-food restaurants.

The Venezuelan concept of family is also a variation of the Latin American norm. Family throughout Latin America is sacrosanct and one of the most important elements of life, and the same holds true for Venezuela. However, the legalization of divorce in the early 1900s has added a new dimension here, with many people over 40 already on their second marriages. As a result, the traditional concept of family goes way beyond the nuclear group to include half-brothers and sisters, as well as step-relatives and step-parents, all of whom may attend the same gathering.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

CATCHING A CACHAPA - Fast-food fans stop for a cachapa, a Venezuelan corn pancake, sometimes stuffed with ham and cheese.

Family life is particularly important during the main Venezuelan holidays. The regional cultural differences are also reflected through the varying manners in which holidays and festivals are celebrated. These events contain an eclectic mix of Roman Catholic traditions, indigenous ritual and African/Caribbean lore. Though they have the same theme, their presentation varies greatly depending on the region of the country.

Venezuelans take their holidays seriously. Caracas virtually closes down over the Christmas period, as well as for Carnival - just before Lent - and during Holy Week, or *Semana Santa*. There are also numerous three-day weekends, known as *puentes*, scattered throughout the year. All are reason enough to play and very little business is done during these periods, since people either flock to the beaches, travel to regions with special religious festival rites or organize their own celebrations.

Fireworks are traditionally set off by children in the streets around Christ-

mas, which is also a time for the traditional public roller skating party in Caracas. In practice, the Christmas period is celebrated during the entire month of December and the beginning of January. Christmas itself is celebrated on Dec. 24, the night when families traditionally attend Mass late at night and then sit down to a long meal of *hallacas*, tasty packages of meat wrapped in corn dough. Presents are opened at midnight but family parties usually go on much longer. Crib scenes are put up all over town, including in the Metro stations, and office blocks are strewn with brightly-colored lights depicting Christmas scenes. New Year, or Año Nuevo, is more of a time to party with friends, so it is easier to find restaurants open specifically on this occasion.

In Caracas, Carnival is more a time for young children, who don costumes and take to the streets, particularly along the Sabana Grande Boulevard. However, in other parts of Venezuela, both Carnival and Semana Santa are serious adult holidays and there are numerous festivities. During Carnival, water bombs and flour and egg packages are hurled at buses and dropped on unsuspecting passersby from the tops of buildings. **(For more information on festivals, see "Folkloric and Religious Festivals," page 424.)**

Another favorite custom is having *piñatas* at children's birthday parties. The papier-maché figures, stuffed with small toys and candies, are broken open by the stick-wielding, blind-folded birthday child.

Children and young people are a large part of of Venezuelan life. More than 75 percent of Venezuelans are under age 35, a statistical fact that has made the country, and particularly Caracas, a pop-culture mecca.

For women, the emphasis is on skin-tight mini skirts, high-heeled shoes and plenty of lipstick. Beauty is a way of life in this country. Potential beauty queens are hand-picked by Miss Venezuela organizer Osmel Souza, who has helped foster the careers of Miss Worlds Susana Duijm, Pilín León, Astrid Carolina Herrera and Ninibeth Leal Jiménez. Venezuela has also produced Miss Universes Maritza Sayalero, Irene Sáez (now Chacao's mayor) and Bárbara Palacios.

In today's world, however, Venezuelan success also means a good career. The young Venezuelans of today are professionals, many of whom were educated abroad and are fluent in English, French and other languages. In the 1970s and 1980s, 40,000 Venezuelans studied abroad, mainly in the United States, through the government scholarship program, Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho.

In addition to education, the United States has strongly influenced Venezuela's culture. Miami's proximity to Venezuela has been crucial in helping to develop its pop-culture market, and the American city serves as a marketing bridge to and from the country. American movies and music have found a young and monied clientele in Venezuela, a combination drastically different from other regions of Latin America. Likewise, the country's music and television programs, particularly the *telenovelas* or soap operas, have had phenomenal success in Venezuela as well as abroad. The attraction to the United States is also reflected in sport, and Venezuelans' unabashed love of baseball.

Shake it all up and you find a diversification of Venezuelan cultural identity defined by sophistication and modernity that still clings to its traditional cultural molds.

EATING IN VENEZUELA

Venezuela's cuisine is probably best known for its staple, *arepas* - thick, round, unleavened cornflour bread, usually served warm. They may be opened and filled with anything from avocado and chicken (*reina pepiada*) to *queso de mano*, a white cheese. These ingredients are also used as toppings for the large, thick, corn pancakes or *cachapas* which are one of the common foods served in roadside bars and cafes.

Pepitos, which are long rolls stuffed with steak, lettuce and tomatoes, and warm *cachitos*, akin to croissants stuffed with ham, also serve as fast-food alternatives. Another calorie-laden treat is the *empanada*, a crescent-shaped fried pastry, filled with spicy beef, chicken, pork or cheese.

For something more substantial, one of the more traditional dishes is *pollo asado*, or roast chicken, which comes whole or in portions, and can be ordered with side dishes of French fries (*papas fritas*). Cattle farming is the largest of the Venezuelan livestock industries, so beef is generally on the menu, often in the form of *lomito* or tenderloin, and as *churrasco*, a standing rib roast.

Among the most common vegetables are *plátanos* (plantains) cooked in a variety of ways, and black beans (*caraotas negras*). Eaten together with rice and shredded, stewed beef, they make up a dish called *pabellón criollo*. The root vegetable *yuca* provides a novel alternative to potatoes in its boiled or fried form. It is often dipped into the piquant sauce called *guasacaca*, which comes in two colors - red for very hot and green for mild.

One dessert specialty is *quesillo*, which differs from flan or creme caramel only in the proportion of egg and milk used in its preparation.

Criollo food can be washed down with a thirst-quenching *limonada frappé* (lemonade with crushed ice). There are also delicious *batidos* made from numerous varieties of fresh juices, including orange and carrot (*naranja y zanahoria*) and blackberry juice (*mora*). The juices are often mixed with milk to form a *merengada*, a sort of thin milkshake. The exotic fruits used to make these drinks are abundant in Venezuela and include mangos, *lechosa* (papaya) and *guanábana* (sapodilla plum).

Coffee is an any-time-of-the-day drink. It comes in small plastic cups not much larger than the size of a shotglass, or in the slightly larger size, known as *grande*. The typical variety is *café con leche*, a weak version that is half coffee and half milk. A stronger version with a dash of milk is *café marron* and black coffee is *café negro*. Capuchino in Venezuela comes with an enormous amount of whipped cream and the ever-present sugar, a must for most Venezuelans.

Do business the right way!
Get your VenAmCham Year Book
Only $75.00
A directory of VenAmCham members

Photo: Mario Corvetto ©

PLENTY OF PLANTAINS - A truck load of this Venezuelan staple heads off to market.

OUT AND ABOUT IN CARACAS

Caracas - a city of contrasts. Even at first sight, striking differences are obvious in this modern metropolis, whose high-rise buildings line the streets of a narrow, lush valley 17 km long (11 miles) and 4 km wide (1.5 miles). The city boundaries extend into the foothills of the coastal mountain range topped by the majestic Avila, a towering natural barrier that separates the 900-meter high (3,000 ft.) capital from the sea.

In pre-Columbian times, the valley was inhabited by the Caracas Indians, for whom the city was named. A small colonial town of red-tile roofs and gracious plazas, Santiago de León de Caracas was founded by the Spanish conquistador, Diego de Losada, on July 25, 1567.

Traces of its colonial roots can still be seen in older parts of the city, particularly in the historical center of Plaza Bolívar. The colonial buildings, however, are overshadowed by high-rise office buildings and apartments, looped together by an intricate network of highways, tunnels, underpasses and overpasses whose interchanges boast such colorful names as La Araña (the Spider), El Ciempiés (the Centipede), and El Pulpo (the Octopus). The Caracas of today is bursting at the seams with people, automobiles, construction, noise and the natural, nervous energy of a major urban center.

Unofficial estimates claim that 4.5 million people, a quarter of the country's population, live in the nation's capital, which is also the capital of the Federal District. About half these Carequeños live in the slum dwellings known as *ranchitos*. At a distance, these neighborhoods form what looks like a patchwork of brown and ocher, pink and blue, which becomes a network of fairy lights as night falls. Up close, the gay colors give way to a grimmer reality. Sun-baked and dusty in the dry season and subject to mudslides during the rains, these *barrios* are home to millions for whom poverty, disease and violence are a way of life - a sharp contrast to the affluence and extravagance seen in other parts of Caracas.

Elsewhere, multi-storied commercial centers and office blocks with underground parking, air-conditioned movie theaters, gourmet restaurants and exclusive boutiques line the streets, all facets of the affluent side of Caracas. Despite the current economic crisis, supermarkets and stores offer increasingly varied products to the consumer with money to spend. But although U.S. and European-styled cars, hamburger stands and blaring stateside television commercials can make Caracas seem very U.S.-oriented, it is still a Latin city at heart. The city's districts bear imaginative names: Los Palos Grandes (the Tall Trees), El Rosal (The Rosebush), and El Coche (The Carriage). Residential zones are called *urbanizaciones* and private houses are termed *quintas*, the old name for country villas.

Caracas is an explosive city suffering from the inevitable growing pains of having too much, too many, too fast. Like most large, overcrowded cities around the world, Caracas is bustling, noisy and dominated by automobiles. For motorists, the city's traffic often borders on the intolerable, especially during peak rush hour, when long stretches of major thoroughfares are jammed solid, bumper to bumper.

The Caracas Metro was viewed as "La Gran Solución" to the intense traffic problems. Built in 1983, the Metro, with its feeder lines of MetroBuses, is a welcome means of travel. In contrast to the streets above, the clean subterranean stations are well marked and offer an excellent alternative to city driving.

Dotting Caracas like oases are the city's parks, which offer refreshing pathways of tropical foliage, picnic and play areas, lakes and zoos. And overlooking the city's east-west flow along the valley floor is Mount Avila. In addition, the valley's lush countryside offers plenty of

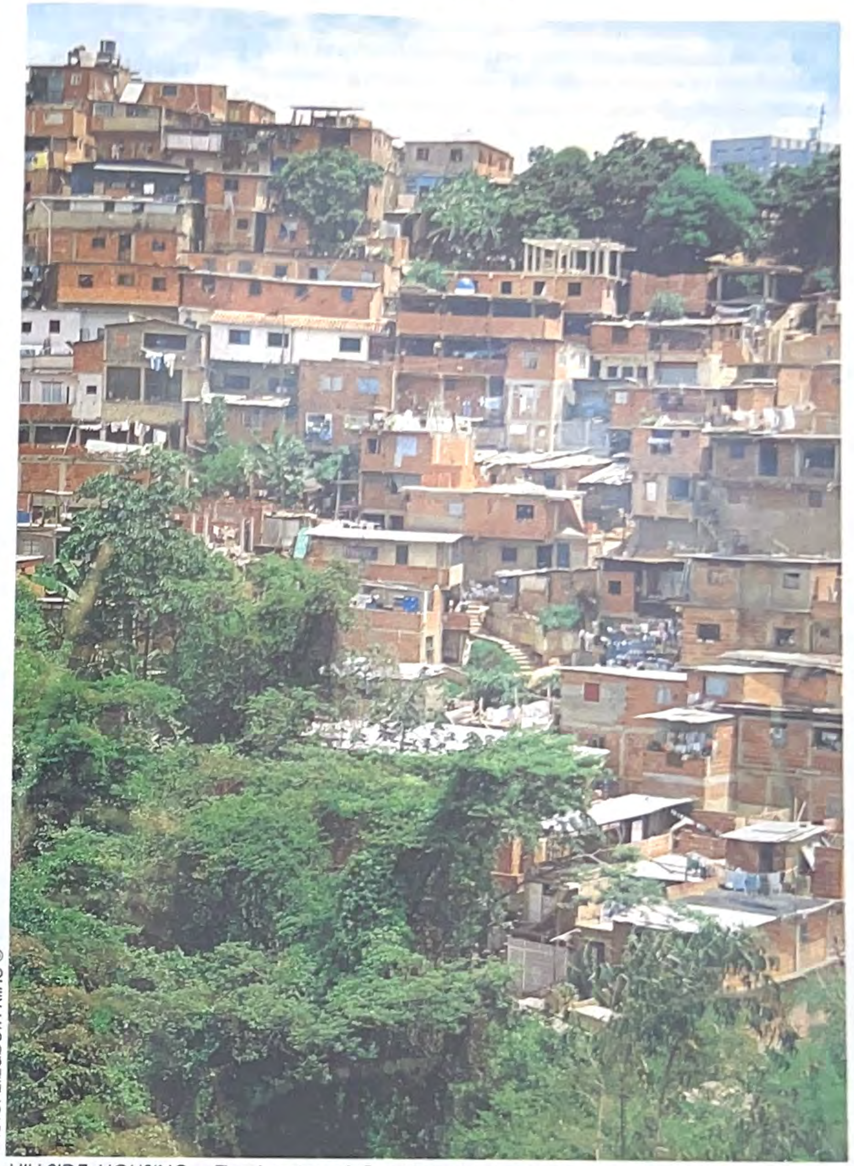


Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

HILLSIDE HOUSING - The barrios of Caracas are home to over half of the capital's population.

hidden mountain pathways. With a year-round climate that resembles late spring or summer in a temperate zone, the city offers endless outdoor sport possibilities.

There is also much to enjoy in the way of culture and entertainment in the city. Caracas has numerous art galleries, museums and theaters, as well as cinemas showing up-to-date movies. Opera, ballet and theater are scheduled regularly. Music is prolific, with many free concerts. As for nightlife, the capital abounds in restaurants, dance clubs and nightclubs.

THE ARTS

CINEMA

Films reach Caracas from the United States surprisingly quickly after their original release, although they are usually only mainstream movies. Most films are shown in their original language with Spanish subtitles. Newspapers list the theater's telephone number, the times of the functions and the censor's rating. Children under the age of 14 are not admitted to any movie rated other than those with an "A" rating and only to those performances that begin before 7:00 p.m. Cinema tickets cost Bs.180 ($1.98), with most theaters offering discount admissions on Mondays.

A number of theaters screen art films, classics and other movies of particular interest to film buffs on Tuesdays. The Ateneo de Caracas often features foreign film festivals that run for a week or two.

Two censor's rating are applied in Caracas - one for the Federal District (west of Chacao) and another for Sucre District, Miranda State (east of Chacao). A "B" rating in the Federal District is for those aged 14 or over, but it applies to anyone over 12 in Sucre District. Likewise, a "C" rating

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

ARTS CENTER - The Teatro Teresa Carreño provides the setting for many of the major cultural events in Caracas.

in the Federal District is for those aged 16 or over, but is for the over-18 crowd in Sucre District. Authorities periodically clamp down on enforcement of the respective ratings. Since the same movie can have two different ratings depending on the cinema location, it is best to check the rating at individual movie houses.

Caracas cinemas include:

Altamira
Edif. Teatro Altamira
Plaza Altamira
Avda. Avila Sur
Tel.: 263.6855

Américas
Centro Comercial Plaza Las Américas
Final de Blvd. Raúl Leoni
El Cafetal
Tel.: 987.7912

Autocine Los Chaguaramos
Avda. La Colina
Los Chaguaramos
Tel.: 661.6504

Broadway
Calle Real de Sabana Grande
Una cuadra oeste de Chacaíto
Tel.: 951.0535

Caroní
Torre Capriles
Plaza Venezuela
Tel.: 781.9698

Centro Plaza
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 283.4775

Cinemateca Nacional
Galería de Arte Nacional
Plaza Morelos
Los Caobos
Tel.: 571.0176
This cinema offers art films, classics and special film series.

Cinemas Uno, Dos, Tres,
Centro Comercial Chacaíto
Chacaíto
Tel.: 952.1080

Cinemóvil Cafetal Uno y Dos
Final de Blvd. Raúl Leoni
Despues de Plaza Las Américas
El Cafetal
Tel.: 985.5836

Cine Paseo
Centro Comercial Paseo Las Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.8479

Concresa
Centro Comercial Concresa
Prados del Este
Tel.: 979.6835

Humboldt
Centro Comercial Parque Humboldt
Prados del Este
Tel.: 979.1964

Marqués Uno y Dos
Unicentro El Marqués
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
El Marqués
Tel.: 21.6735

Miniteatro del Este Uno y Dos
Plaza Venezuela
Los Caobos
Tel.: 574.5228

Montalbán Uno y Dos
Centro Comercial Uslar
Montalbán
Tel.: 442.0009

Multicine
Edif. Beco
Chacaíto
Tel.: 952.8465

Multicinema CCCT
CCCT
Chuao
Tel.: 959.1427

Obelisco
Centro Altamira
Avda. San Juan Bosco
Altamira
Tel.: 31.6840

Parque Central
Avda. Bolívar
Parque Central
Tel.: 576.3239

Radio City
Boulevard Sabana Grande
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 71.1986

San Martín Uno y Dos
Centro Comercial San Martín
Piso 2
Tel.: 462.8265

Trasnocho
Centro Comercial Paseo Las Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.4246

Trébol Multiteatro
Centro Comercial Los Dos Caminos
Avda. Rómulo Gallegos
Los Dos Caminos
Tel.: 36.1957

THEATER

The Venezuelan theater scene, particularly that of Caracas, offers a rich variety. In addition to first-rate national and international productions, Caracas plays host every two years to an international theater festival, which features live performances by groups from around the world, as well as an impressive showing of foreign films. The 10th festival is scheduled for 1994.

The most notable Caracas theater groups are Nuevo Grupo, which offers performances at Teatro Alberto de Paz y Mateos in La Colina, and Grupo Rajatabla, sponsors of the International Theater Festival, at the Ala Rajatabla of the Ateneo de Caracas. Also, the National Theater Company performs at the Teatro Nacional under the direction of Isaac Chocrón, Venezuela's leading playwright.

Caracas theater generally has two seasons, from February to March and from October to November, but this varies. For children's theater, Teatro Tilingo presents matinées on weekends, and its puppet shows are popular.

The Caracas Playhouse offers theater productions in English. Performances are held about four times a year at varying sites and are usually announced in The Daily Journal.

Caracas theaters include:

Alberto de Paz y Mateos
Avda. Andrés Bello
Prolongación Los Manolos
La Colina
Tel.: 782.1621, 793.3903

Alianza Francesa de Chacaíto
Edif. Centro Solano, P.B.
Avda. Francisco Solano
Con 3ra. Avda. de Las Delicias
Chacaíto
Tel.: 71.1773

Ateneo de Caracas
Plaza Morelos
Los Caobos
Tel.: 573.4622/4400

Aula Magna
Universidad Central
Los Chaguaramos
Tel.: 61.9811/9830

Aveporte
Plaza Morelos
Los Caobos
Tel.: 571.1402

Cadafe
Edif. Cadafe
Avda. Sánz
El Marqués
Tel.: 208.8355

CANTV
Avda. Libertador
Tel.: 500.8366

Casa Rómulo Gallegos
Avda. Luis Roche y 3ra. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 285.2990

Chacaíto Uno
Centro Comercial Chacaíto
Chacaíto
Tel.: 952.0371

Chacaíto Dos
Centro Comercial Chacaíto
Chacaíto
Tel.: 952.0315/0371

El Poliedro
Autopista del Este
Tel.: 681.3333

Electricidad de Caracas Concert Hall
Edif. Electricidad de Caracas
Avda. Vollmer
San Bernardino
Tel.: 573.9111

Estudio Mata de Coco
Centro Comercial Mata de Coco
Avda. Blandín
La Castellana
Tel.: 31.1366

Fedecámaras
Avda. El Empalme y Calle El Carmen
El Bosque
Tel.: 71.9742

Fundación Rajatabla
Edif. Rajatabla
Ateneo de Caracas
Las Palmas
Avda. Principal Las Palmas
La Florida
Tel.: 782.2468

Los Cedros
Centro Comercial Los Cedros
Avda. Libertador
Tel.: 71.3546, 72.0834

Los Ruices
Centro Comercial de Los Ruices
Penthouse
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Tel.: 34.4217

Luis Pereza
Avda. Universitaria
y Plaza de Las Tres Gracias
Los Chaguaramos
Tel.: 62.2582, 662.7814

Municipal
Esquina Municipal
Oeste 8 y Sur 47
El Silencio
Tel.: 41.8522/5384

Nacional
Esquina Los Cipreses
Avda. Vicente Lecuna - Este 10 y Avda. Sur
El Silencio
Tel.: 41.5956, 483.1459/2699

Plaza Morelos
Los Caobos
Tel.: 573.4622

Prisma
Edif. Doral Caracas
Esquina Teatro Caracas
La Candelaria
Tel.: 575.3353/0853

Rafael Guinand
Centro Plaza
Piso 6, 1ra. Transversal Entrada
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 283.3244

Teatro La Comedia
Torre Oeste, Sótano 1
Parque Central
Tel.: 574.6821

Teatro Teresa Carreño
Plaza Morelos
Los Caobos
Tel.: 574.9122

Tilingo
Parque Arístides Rojas
Avda. Andrés Bello
Maripérez
Tel.: 781.3290

DANCE

There are numerous ballet and dance companies in Caracas with varying degrees of professionalism. Centro Cultural Teresa Carreño has three dance companies: Ballet Teresa Carreño, which performs opera and classical ballet; Ballet Nuevo Mundo, founded by prima ballerina Zhandra Rodríguez, which performs theatrical modern ballet; and the modern dance troupe, Danzahoy. The Centro Cultural Teresa Carreño also has a ballet school. The Ateneo de Caracas, located adjacent to the Teatro Teresa Carreño, has a resident modern dance company.

There are frequent offerings by touring companies, always announced in the local press.

The ballet season is generally April - May, with special performances held at other times during the year, particularly at Christmas and during Holy Week. A traditional favorite is Ballet Teresa Carreño's December performance of The Nutcracker, or Cascanueces.

OPERA

The opera season follows the ballet season in Caracas, with performances held at the Municipal Theater and at the Teresa Carreño Cultural Complex. A discount is offered for season tickets at both locations, or tickets may be purchased at the box office.

A semi-professional group, Camerata de Caracas, has an orchestra and three choirs (Baroque, Medieval and Renaissance), and also performs opera during the season.

ORCHESTRA

There are five major orchestras in Caracas. The oldest of these is the Orquesta Sinfónica de Venezuela, which performs at the Aula Magna at Central University of Venezuela, as well as at various other locations in the city.

The Orquesta Sinfónica Simón Bolívar de Venezuela is the resident orchestra of the Teatro Teresa Carreño and holds regular concerts at the Sala José Félix Rivas Sundays at 6:00 p.m.

The Orquesta Sinfónica Municipal usually accompanies the ballet and opera. This orchestra also holds regular concerts at Aula Magna on Sundays at 11:00 a.m.

Fundación Orquesta Sinfónica Venezuela often performs at the Sala José Félix Rivas at the Teresa Carreño, Sundays at 6:00 p.m.

Sinfonietta de Caracas regularly performs at the Electricidad de Caracas concert hall, Avda. Vollmer, San Bernardino.

Performances by youth orchestras from around the country are often held in Caracas. Once or twice a year, the top performers from the nation's youth orchestras perform as the Orquesta Nacional Juvenil de Venezuela. These performances are generally held at the Sala José Félix Rivas at the Teresa Carreño and are announced in the local papers.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

DRUMMING UP A CROWD - Tambores players create a street rhythm in Carabobo state.

OTHER CONCERTS

In Caracas, regularly scheduled concerts are sponsored by such institutions as the Museo del Teclado, Quinta Anauco, Centro Cultural Consolidado, Centro Venezolano-Americano, Asociación Cultural Humboldt, the major museums, and the United Christian Church.

The Asociación Cultural Pro-Música de Cámara offers free, high-quality chamber music concerts at 11:00 a.m. Sunday at Quinta de Anauco, Avda. Panteón, San Bernardino (Tel.: 51.8517).

The Asociación de Música Antigua, an amateur choir and orchestra, holds several concerts each year at the Humboldt Cultural Center in San Bernardino. Música Antigua is dedicated to Baroque Music. In December, this group performs at the Iglesia de La Trinidad in Prados del Este. The Ateneo de Caracas also offers regularly scheduled concerts (classical, popular and jazz) and solo performances in its Sala de Conciertos on Saturdays. Special performances by most groups are given during the Christmas season and Holy Week.

Over the last few years, music festivals have become increasingly popu-

lar. The 1993 Festival Internacional del Hatillo, in El Hatillo, is scheduled for late October and will include blues, jazz, music from the Bógota Philharmonic Orchestra and traditional Venezuelan music. More information can be obtained from the Casa de la Cultura in El Hatillo at (02) 963.4848.

Caracas has also become a center for visiting international pop groups, who often play at the Poliedro. In the past year, Guns & Roses (United States), Soda Stereo (Argentina) and Foreigner (United States) have all played here.

Obtaining tickets for cultural events in Caracas often requires standing in line at the box office immediately before a scheduled event. Since a great deal of advance notice is not often given before performances, and because resident groups often vary the location of their performances, tickets cannot always be purchased in advance. Keeping an eye on the cultural sections of the local newspapers can help cultural mavens monitor upcoming performances.

A certain percentage of seats are held aside for credit card purchasers, who phone in their request; since tickets for major events are sold out very quickly, this is a recommended method for ensuring seats. Seating selection is also generally better than that obtained at the box office. Tickets can be reserved through Diners Club at 503.2555.

For cultural enthusiasts, becoming affiliated with the Teatro Teresa Carreño eliminates most of the problems associated with obtaining tickets. Amigos del Teresa Carreño, or friends of the complex, receive special listings of performances and discount rates. There are several categories of membership with different benefits for each category. More information can be obtained from the foundation's director, Enrique Berrizbeitia, at 572.1011.

ART MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

The quality of paintings and sculpture in Venezuela is among the best in the hemisphere. The works of many Venezuelan artists such as Jacobo Borges, Carlos Cruz Diez, Mateo Manaure, Alejandro Otero and Jesús Soto are internationally recognized. Numerous exhibits of national and international artists are also presented frequently.

Most galleries and museums close on Mondays, with Sunday as the traditional day for opening and closing exhibitions. The following is a list of the major art galleries and museums as well as some smaller museums that specialize in one artist's work:

CARACAS PUBLIC GALLERIES

Galería de Arte Nacional
Plaza Morelos (en frente del Caracas Hilton)
Parque Los Caobos
Tel.: 571.3519/3178, 572.0519/1070
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Sunday)
Limited parking space in front of the gallery, though parking is available at the underground parking lot of the Teatro Teresa Carreño or Hotel Caracas Hilton. Metro recommended.

Dedicated to preserving and promoting works by Venezuelan artists or by foreign artists who have developed their art in Venezuela, the Galería's permanent collection of more than 4,100 works ranges from a display of pre-Columbian stone engravings (petroglyphs) to works by such 19th century and contemporary Venezuelan artists as Martín Tovar y Tovar, Arturo Michelena, Armando Reverón, Alejandro Otero and Cristóbal Rojas.

In addition to housing the Cinemateca Nacional, which shows commercial and documentary films from countries all over the world, the Galería also offers a wide variety of activities. Musical events, such as modern ballet or folk dancing, are occasionally held on Sundays. Art

classes and workshops are available for children aged 7 to 14, and there are adult or student internships. Further details can be obtained from the Galería's Departamento de Educación.

Museo Arturo Michelena
Esquina Urapal (Una cuadra sur de la Iglesia de La Pastora)
La Pastora
Tel.: 862.5853
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Sunday)
Parking in Plaza of the Church of La Pastora

A delightful, tiny, old-style house with brightly-polished wooden floors, the museum contains personal items of Arturo Michelena, the famous 19th century Venezuelan painter, and displays many of his drawings and paintings. Some of the pieces in the house, which was the painter's studio, are unfinished canvases, allowing the viewer a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the elements that contributed to the artist's sense of composition.

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas Sofía Imber
Edif. Mohedano, Sótano 1
Parque Central-East
Tel.: 573.5224/8289/4602/7279
Hours: 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Sunday)
Parking in Parque Central

Directed since its 1973 creation by Sofía Imber, the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo is one of the finest museums of contemporary art in Latin America. Among its permanent collection, and forming an intricate part of the building's architecture, are wall sculptures by Jesús Soto, a free-hanging rope sculpture by Gego that spans the museum's three floors, as well as sculptures by Alejandro Otero and Francisco Narváez.

The Museo's growing permanent collection also includes works by famed international artists such as Picasso, Botero, Chagall and Matisse. A recently added outdoor sculpture garden, featuring the work of such modernists as Lynn Chadwick and Baltasar Lobo, provides a quiet spot to enjoy both the art and the ambience of Caracas.

Temporary exhibits often run from several weeks to a month or two, and include works by contemporary Venezuelan artists, as well as occasional foreign artist exhibitions. At the same time, the museum is committed to introducing new Venezuelan and foreign talents in a variety of media forms.

Housed in the new wing is a large research library where materials are also available in Braille; an artisan shop that displays and sells the works of many local artists; a poster and framing shop; and an adjoining, privately operated mini-mall with a restaurant, boutiques and art shops.

Art education is an integral part of the museum's ongoing involvement with the Caracas public. Guided tours are available both for individuals and groups; seminars and workshops in plastic art media are regularly scheduled for children and adults.

Extensión Este del Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Sala Cadafe
Edif. Cadafe
Avda. Sanz
El Marqués
Tel.: 22.6256

Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Tuesday to Friday)
10:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Saturday and Sunday)

The Eastern Annex of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo offers temporary exhibitions of works by contemporary artists. Shows change every month. Visitors are welcome to use the reference library.

Extensión Oeste del Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Sala Ipostel
Edif. Ipostel
Avda. José Angel Lamas
San Martín
Tel.: 462.7024
Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Tuesday to Friday)
10:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. (Saturday and Sunday)

The Western Annex of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo exhibits the works of contemporary artists, with shows changing every six weeks. The reference library is open to the public.

Museo de Bellas Artes
Plaza Morelos (en frente del Caracas Hilton)
Parque Los Caobos
Tel.: 571.0169/2119
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Saturday)
10:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Sunday)

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

ARCHED ART - The towers of Parque Central in Caracas p[illegible]e a backdrop to a sculpture by Alejandro Otero in Plaza Venezuela.

Limited parking in front of the gallery, though it is available at the underground parking lot of the Teatro Teresa Carreño or Hotel Caracas Hilton. Metro recommended.

Behind the Galería de Arte Nacional and near the Museo de Ciencias Naturales, the Museo de Bellas Artes offers a great variety of artists and art forms. Established more than 50 years ago, its permanent exhibits include moving pieces of sculpture under black light; a sculpture garden featuring works by Henry Moore and Alberto Guzmán; a collection of cubist art; and a wall sculpture by Jesús Soto. Temporary exhibitions of foreign artists are periodically organized.

Museo Emilio Boggio
Palacio Municipal (Concejo Municipal)
Plaza Bolívar
Esquina Las Monjas
Tel.: 545.6706
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Tuesday to Friday)
10:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday and holidays)
Parking very difficult - Metro or taxi recommended.

The museum offers a fine display of the life work of the internationally acclaimed impressionist artist, Emilio Boggio, one of Venezuela's most influential painters (1857-1920). Major works are shown, as well as drawings and artifacts from the artist's studio. The museum also houses an intriguing collection of scale-model miniatures by Raúl Santana showing aspects of early Venezuelan life, and another group of scale models, by architect Ruth Neumann, of whole blocks of colonial Caracas.

PRIVATE GALLERIES

Below are listed a few of the more established private art galleries:

Galería Bass
Calle París (Entre Calle Cali y Veracruz)
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.3225
Hours: 10:00 a.m - 12:30 p.m., 3:00 - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Saturday to Sunday)

Galería Durban
Calle Madríd
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.2353/4231
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Saturday and Sunday)

Galería Estudio Uno
Taller Jesús Soto, Quinta Hilda
Avda. Lima
Los Caobos
Tel.: 793.4006
Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

Galería Euroamericana
Quinta Tierrafirme
Calle California
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.1204
Fax: 91.5401
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Saturday and Sunday)

Galería Félix
Avda. Manuel Felipe Tovar con Avda. Agustín Codazzi
San Bernardino
Tel.: 52.7806
Fax: 52.7949
Hours: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Saturday and Sunday)

Galería Freites
Avda. Orinoco
Entre Jalisco y Monterrey
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 752.4219
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Saturday)
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Sunday)

Galería Leo Blasini
Avda. El Empalme
El Bosque
Tel.: 731.0443/0532
Fax: 952.1227
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Saturday and Sunday)

Galería Sotavento
Edif. San Carlos
Calle Jalisco
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 752.7798/2543
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 3:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Sunday)

MUSEUMS AND HISTORICAL SITES

The real heart of colonial Caracas lies in Plaza Bolívar, which is surrounded by history. In addition to acting as the central meeting and marketplace, the center was where the country's first Constitution was read in 1811. The streets near Capitólio Metro station are detailed with colonial architecture. The lush plants in the square provide a suitable backdrop for the inevitable statue of Simón Bolívar, the Liberator of South America.

At the eastern side of the square is the Cathedral, completed in 1674, which has remained intact since 1876, despite several damaging earthquakes. The beautiful chapels and altars within are enhanced by works such as Rubens' "The Resurrection," and the unfinished "Last Supper," by Venezuelan painter Arturo Michelena. The area behind the nave houses the tombs of Bolívar's parents, his sister, and his wife, María Teresa. The crucifix in the church is a model of the cross that Christopher Columbus took to the Dominican Republic in 1514.

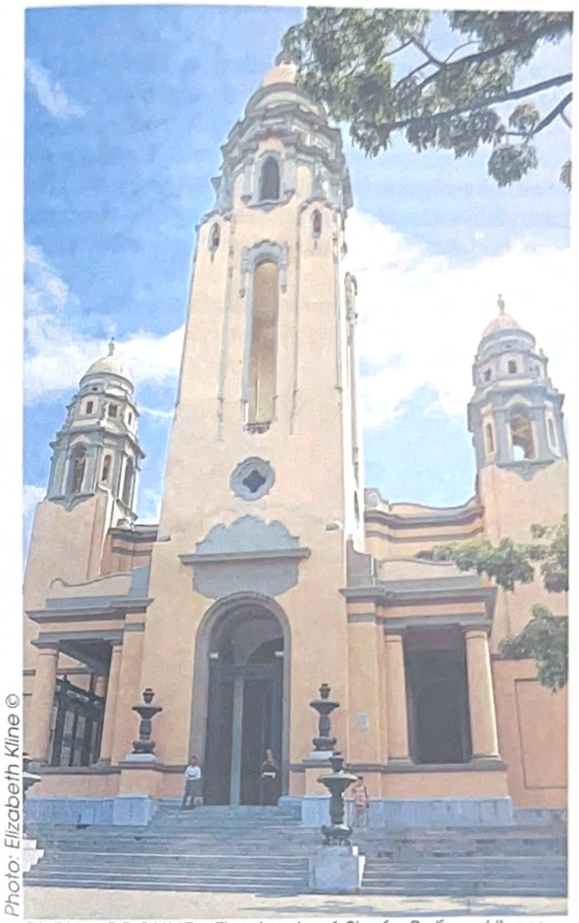


Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

BURIAL GROUND - The body of Simón Bolívar, Liberator of South America, is buried with other Venezuelan historical figures.

The Cathedral is open from 7:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. and from 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., Monday to Saturdays, opening half an hour later after the lunch break on Sundays and holidays (Tel.: 82.4963/5101).

Directly opposite the Cathedral is the Casa Amarilla or Yellow House, painted in the 1870s by its owner, President Antonio Guzmán Blanco, in honor of his political party. One of the oldest buildings in Caracas, it was built at the end of the 17th century as a royal prison, and has since been a presidential residence, military barracks and now acts as headquarters for the Foreign Ministry. On April 19, 1810, later proclaimed the day of the Declaration of Independence, the Captain-General asked for a vote of confidence for the Spanish Crown from the crowds gathered under the balcony of the Casa Amarilla. It was denied, and power passed into the hands of the Town Council - an act that marked the beginning of the long struggle for independence. The Casa Amarilla is not open to the public, but visitors may step inside the doorway and observe the gracious courtyard and its colonial arcade. Guided tours in English can be arranged with the Oficina de Protocolo (Tel.: 81.8521).

The northern side of the square is

home to the government palace of the Federal District, where art exhibitions and occasional concerts are held (Tel.: 81.1111). The City Hall, where the Declaration of Independence was signed, is to the south. The building was previously a seminary and was later renamed the Royal University in 1725 by decree of Spanish King Felipe V. The fountain in the central courtyard should be noted because its markings of a lion, scallop shell and cross of Santiago are part of the coat of arms presented to the city by the King of Spain. This building also houses the Museo de Caracas, which has miniatures by Raúl Santana depicting the early life of Caracas, and a permanent collection of the paintings of Venezuelan artist Emilio Boggio. The City Hall is open from 8:30 a.m. - noon and from 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Tel.: 545.8688/7593/7448).

Just west of the City Hall is the gold-domed nation's Capitol, which was built in less than four months in 1874 after dictator Antonio Guzmán Blanco expelled the Catholic Church from the country and ordered the demolition of the Concepción Convent, where the Capitol now stands. The fountain in the central courtyard is an exact replica of the one in France's Place de la Concord.

The Elliptic Hall within is divided into yellow, blue and red sections to represent the Venezuelan flag, and a large ceiling mural of the Battle of Carabobo by Venezuelan painter Martín Tovar y Tovar covers the ceiling of the Blue Room. Displayed also in the Blue Room is the chest that contains the Declaration of Independence, which is put on public view each July 5th - Independence Day. The black marble box in the Capitol holds the gold key to the coffin containing Simón Bolívar's remains in the National Panteón. The Capitolio Nacional is open from 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and from 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., Tuesday to Sunday (Tel.: 483.3644).

Further south east in Plaza San Jacinto is the Casa Natal, a reconstruction of the 1783

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

COLONIAL CARACAS - The Concejo Municpal or city hall in downtown Caracas.

birthplace of Simón Bolívar. It is open from 9:00 a.m. - noon and from 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., Tuesday to Friday. On weekends, it opens from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and from 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Tel.: 541.2563). The stone font where Bolívar was baptized can be seen on the house's patio. Furnishings and memorabilia are of the period; many, including the canopied bed, are from the Bolívar family. The walls are covered with giant murals by the Venezuelan 20th century painter, Tito Salas, which depict dramatic scenes of Bolívar's life and of the history of Venezuelan independence.

Bolívar's remains are buried with those of 138 of Venezuela's most revered men and women, in the Panteón, situated in the Plaza del Panteón, about six blocks north of the Cathedral. Here, there are memorials to many other military heroes of the War of Independence: General Rafael Urdaneta, General Francisco de Miranda, Rear Admiral and Brigadier General Renato Beluche and El Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho, General Antonio José de Sucre. The Panteón is the resting place of several former presidents of Venezuela: José Antonio Páez, the rough plainsman who became the country's first constitutional president; José María Vargas, who led Venezuela through some of its most turbulent early years; and José Gregorio Monagas, who declared the nation's slaves free in 1854.

Floorstones mark the graves of two of Venezuela's most outstanding painters, Arturo Michelena and Cristóbal Rojas, and a wall plaque bears the name of Andrés Bello, poet, novelist, political scientist and tutor to Simón Bolívar. There is a changing-of-the-guard ceremony just before opening, and at 80-minute intervals thereafter. The Panteón is open from 9:00 a.m. - noon and from 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., Tuesday to Friday, and from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. on weekends and holidays (Tel.: 862.1518).

Other historical buildings and museums include:

Centro Para La Cultura Popular Traditional
Quinta Micomicona
Avda. Zuloaga
Los Rosales
Tel.: 61.2118, 62.5726/7122
Fax: 62.7296
Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
Closed Saturday and Sunday
Parking on museum grounds.

Housed in a *hacienda* that belonged to the Zuloaga family, the center displays both temporary and permanent exhibits with a variety of craft items that include musical instruments, toys, tools and implements, all illustrating the popular traditions of Venezuela.

The library is open to the public and has numerous publications on Venezuelan culture and folklore. Students and tourist groups are welcome, though they are urged to call in advance.

Cuadra Bolívar
Quinta Crespo
Avda. Sur 2, Esquina Bárcenas
El Centro
Tel.: 483.3971
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Friday)
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday)

home to the government palace of the Federal District, where art exhibitions and occasional concerts are held (Tel.: 81.1111). The City Hall, where the Declaration of Independence was signed, is to the south. The building was previously a seminary and was later renamed the Royal University in 1725 by decree of Spanish King Felipe V. The fountain in the central courtyard should be noted because its markings of a lion, scallop shell and cross of Santiago are part of the coat of arms presented to the city by the King of Spain. This building also houses the Museo de Caracas, which has miniatures by Raúl Santana depicting the early life of Caracas, and a permanent collection of the paintings of Venezuelan artist Emilio Boggio. The City Hall is open from 8:30 a.m. - noon and from 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Tel.: 545.8688/7593/7448).

Just west of the City Hall is the gold-domed nation's Capitol, which was built in less than four months in 1874 after dictator Antonio Guzmán Blanco expelled the Catholic Church from the country and ordered the demolition of the Concepción Convent, where the Capitol now stands. The fountain in the central courtyard is an exact replica of the one in France's Place de la Concord.

The Elliptic Hall within is divided into yellow, blue and red sections to represent the Venezuelan flag, and a large ceiling mural of the Battle of Carabobo by Venezuelan painter Martín Tovar y Tovar covers the ceiling of the Blue Room. Displayed also in the Blue Room is the chest that contains the Declaration of Independence, which is put on public view each July 5th - Independence Day. The black marble box in the Capitol holds the gold key to the coffin containing Simón Bolívar's remains in the National Panteón. The Capitolio Nacional is open from 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and from 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., Tuesday to Sunday (Tel.: 483.3644).

Further south east in Plaza San Jacinto is the Casa Natal, a reconstruction of the 1783

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

COLONIAL CARACAS - The Concejo Municpal or city hall in downtown Caracas.

birthplace of Simón Bolívar. It is open from 9:00 a.m. - noon and from 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., Tuesday to Friday. On weekends, it opens from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and from 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Tel.: 541.2563). The stone font where Bolívar was baptized can be seen on the house's patio. Furnishings and memorabilia are of the period; many, including the canopied bed, are from the Bolívar family. The walls are covered with giant murals by the Venezuelan 20th century painter, Tito Salas, which depict dramatic scenes of Bolívar's life and of the history of Venezuelan independence.

Bolívar's remains are buried with those of 138 of Venezuela's most revered men and women, in the Panteón, situated in the Plaza del Panteón, about six blocks north of the Cathedral. Here, there are memorials to many other military heroes of the War of Independence: General Rafael Urdaneta, General Francisco de Miranda, Rear Admiral and Brigadier General Renato Beluche and El Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho, General Antonio José de Sucre. The Panteón is the resting place of several former presidents of Venezuela: José Antonio Páez, the rough plainsman who became the country's first constitutional president; José María Vargas, who led Venezuela through some of its most turbulent early years; and José Gregorio Monagas, who declared the nation's slaves free in 1854.

Floorstones mark the graves of two of Venezuela's most outstanding painters, Arturo Michelena and Cristóbal Rojas, and a wall plaque bears the name of Andrés Bello, poet, novelist, political scientist and tutor to Simón Bolívar. There is a changing-of-the-guard ceremony just before opening, and at 80-minute intervals thereafter. The Panteón is open from 9:00 a.m. - noon and from 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., Tuesday to Friday, and from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. on weekends and holidays (Tel.: 862.1518).

Other historical buildings and museums include:

Centro Para La Cultura Popular Traditional
Quinta Micomicona
Avda. Zuloaga
Los Rosales
Tel.: 61.2118, 62.5726/7122
Fax: 62.7296
Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
Closed Saturday and Sunday
Parking on museum grounds.

Housed in a *hacienda* that belonged to the Zuloaga family, the center displays both temporary and permanent exhibits with a variety of craft items that include musical instruments, toys, tools and implements, all illustrating the popular traditions of Venezuela.

The library is open to the public and has numerous publications on Venezuelan culture and folklore. Students and tourist groups are welcome, though they are urged to call in advance.

Cuadra Bolívar
Quinta Crespo
Avda. Sur 2, Esquina Bárcenas
El Centro
Tel.: 483.3971
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Friday)
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday)

Parking difficult - taxi recommended.

The Cuadra Bolívar is a beautiful restoration of the Bolívar family's gracious country home, El Palmar. It contains cool gardens and patios, colonial furniture, a typical kitchen and stable area, historic portraits and books. This house was used in 1808 as a secret meeting place for the young revolutionaries who were to bring about independence in 1811.

Visitors are obliged to visit the museum in the company of a guide.

La Casona
Avda. Central
Santa Cecilia
La Casona
Tel.: 36.1261, 284.6322
Ample parking

The official residence of the president of Venezuela, La Casona is a restored cacao plantation, dating back to colonial times. It boasts an excellent art collection, fountains, patios, gardens and Spanish-criollo furnishings and offers a rare, authentic view of Venezuela's colonial past.

Bilingual tours are offered at 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, but must be arranged at least one week in advance. The list of visitors, their passport or *cédula* number, and a phone number where the group can be reached must be submitted in duplicate at the time the reservation is made. The *cédula* or passport is required for admission. Visitors must be appropriately dressed; no children under age 9 are allowed.

Miraflores Palace
Avda. Urdaneta entre Norte 8 y Norte 10
El Centro
Tel.: 801.3120/3133

The working office of the president of Venezuela, Miraflores was originally intended to be the private residence of former President Joaquín Crespo at the end of the 19th century.

Elegantly appointed with French Renaissance furniture and art treasures, Miraflores is not open to the public. Group visits may be arranged by written request, which includes the names and *cédula* numbers of those who want to attend. The request should be addressed to Dirección General Seccional de Relaciones Presidenciales, Miraflores.

Museo Bolivariano
Plaza San Jacinto (al lado de la Casa Natal)
El Centro
Tel.: 545.9828
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Friday)
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday)
Parking very difficult - Metro or taxi recommended.

The Museo Bolivariano contains weapons, books, mantillas, watches - a whole world of Bolívar memorabilia and personal effects. On the ground floor, there is a private library of books, papers and official documents relating to Venezuelan independence. Upstairs, visitors may wander through a fascinating portrait gallery of revolutionary heroes.

Museo Caracas (Concejo Municipal)
Plaza Bolívar
Tel.: 545.6706
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Tuesday to Friday)
10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday and holidays)
Parking very difficult - Metro or taxi recommended.

This museum features a world of charming wood-carved miniatures, depicting scenes of life in Caracas from colonial times to the turn of the century. Created by the Venezuelan artist, Raúl Santana, the miniatures show great attention to detail. The delightful result is a faithful reproduction of the people of Caracas, their customs, traditions and history.

Museo de Arte Colonial - Quinta Anauco
Avda. Panteón, con Avda. Boyacá
San Bernardino
Tel.: 51.8517/8650
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Tuesday to Friday)
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday and holidays)
A large parking lot is next door.

The former residence of the Marqués del Toro, hero of the War of Independence and friend of Simón Bolívar, the Quinta Anauco has been reconstructed and restored in careful detail. It contains a beautiful collection of colonial furniture, household implements, paintings, sculpture and other works of art. Of special interest is the *tinajero*, a water filter stone, in the kitchen, and the fresh water system running through the bathroom. The surrounding gardens, among them a portico laden with hanging orchids, are thick with colorful and fragrant tropical plants and trees, which would have been found in a colonial garden.

On occasion, chamber music for piano or small ensembles is performed in the former stables, which have been outfitted for use as an auditorium. Performances are usually on weekend evenings.

Museo de Ciencias Naturales
Plaza Morelos
En frente de Caracas Hilton
Parque Los Caobos
Tel.: 571.1265/0464
Fax: 571.1265
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Sunday)
Limited parking space in front of the museum, though it is also available at the underground parking lot of the Teatro Teresa Carreño or Hotel Caracas Hilton. Metro recommended.

The Museo de Ciencias Naturales features Huellas, a permanent exhibit of Venezuelan archeology. African art, prehistoric exhibits, birds of Venezuela, mammals of the world, and the story of solar energy are also on permanent display. Other exhibits include Venezuelan flora and fauna, folklore, geology and crafts.

Museo de Instrumentos de Teclado
Edif. Tacagua
Parque Central
Tel./fax: 572.0713
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Sunday)
Parking: Parque Central

This keyboard instrument museum is located in the northwestern corner of the Parque Central complex in the Edif. Tacagua, one flight up from the Museo de Los Niños. It houses a collection of antique and historic instruments. Concerts are held on Saturday and Sunday at 11:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Museo de Los Niños
Entre Edif. Catuche y Edif. Tacagua
Parque Central
Tel.: 572.4112, 573.1056/5312
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Wednesday to Sunday)

Five levels of fun and learning await visitors of all ages at this unique hands-on museum. Visitors are led by trained guides through a series of fascinating and colorful exhibits, which may also be viewed independently. The first mezzanine houses the displays of physical sciences, where visitors can explore perception, light and sound. The next area is biology, where a full-size see-through mannequin demonstrates how the human body works. The communications exhibit explains how television, telephone and radio work, and the ecology display helps to explain why conserving natural resources is important. The final exhibit, on an open-air terrace, is a greenhouse where children can see how plants grow. The museum also has a store and library.

Museo del Transporte
Parque Rómulo Betancourt/Parque del Este
(Enter by crossing a pedestrian bridge that extends over the Autopista access road, leading from the park's parking lot to the museum, located on the other side.)
Tel.: 34.1621/2234
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday)
9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. (Wednesday - Children only)

The Museo del Transporte contains a surprisingly large collection of vintage automobiles, handsome, shiny and in beautiful condition. The horse-drawn wagons and carriages, trains and airplanes are all from Venezuela's pioneering days in transportation. There is a small outdoor snack bar.

Planetario Humboldt
Parque Rómulo Betancourt/ Parque del Este
Tel.: 34.9188, 238.0850

Half-hour programs are shown hourly from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, Sunday and holidays. Admission is Bs.20 ($.22), with children aged 6 and under free. Programs are held on weekdays by prior arrangement for school groups only at 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Admission is Bs.10 ($.11) per child.

The Planetario Humboldt offers a changing program of the Caracas sky at night, depending on the time of year. On permanent display in the circular hallway surrounding

the planetarium are photos and drawings, most of which pertain to Halley's comet. Courses in navigation and astronomy are offered at night.

Religious buildings of historical interest in Caracas include:

Basílica de Santa Teresa
Oeste 8 y Calle Sur (Plaza Diego Ibarra)
Esquina Santa Teresa
El Centro
Tel.: 545.4380
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Daily)
Parking very difficult - Metro or taxi recommended.

Built in the 19th century by order of the dictator, Guzmán Blanco (1870-1887), it was consecrated as a Basílica in 1974.

Today it is famous for the life-like image of the Nazarene of San Pablo that graces the nave. A portrayal of Christ, bending under the burden of the Cross, the Nazarene was carved by a *criollo* sculptor who, legend has it, died of shock when the statue spoke to him. The Nazarene was taken out for a procession through the streets of Caracas during an outbreak of the Black Death in 1696. When the image became entangled in the branches of a lime tree, showering the populace with the fruit, it was seen as a sign that limes would work a miraculous cure for the plague victims. Indeed, lime juice did help many of the afflicted. The miraculous image is still venerated by thousands and is visited especially on Good Friday.

San Francisco (Saint Francis of Assisi)
Avda. Universidad, Esquina San Francisco
El Centro
Tel.: 41.5707
Fax: 482.2442
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - noon, 2:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Daily)
Parking very difficult - Metro or taxi recommended.

The church of San Francisco, which went under construction at the end of the 16th century, displays an intricate, graceful exterior of sculpted designs and lattice work. It was here in 1813 that Simón Bolívar was named El Gran Libertador de Naciones, and given command of the Revolutionary Armies; here also was the scene of Bolívar's magnificent state funeral in 1842, an occasion for which the entire church was draped in gold and black.

Of particular interest is the image immediately to the right upon entering: Our Lady of Solitude, one of the figures carried through the streets of Caracas during the Holy Week procession. A copy of a Spanish statue, La Virgen de la Soledad is shown kneeling, holding her rosary. The packing crate containing this image was thrown overboard during a storm on the voyage from Spain to the New World. Undamaged, the Virgin was later washed ashore in Naiguatá and taken to the church of San Francisco.

Santa Capilla
Avda. Urdaneta y Calle Sur
Esquina Santa Capilla
El Centro
Tel.: 81.8894
Hours: 6:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Daily)

Parking very difficult - Metro or taxi recommended.

Also built during the dictatorship of Guzmán Blanco (1870-1887), the Santa Capilla is styled after Sainte Chapelle in Paris. It is believed that the first Mass to take place in Caracas was said on this site by priests of the army of Diego de Losada - in thanks for the Spaniards' victory over the Indians of the valley.

No religious ceremonies are held here, as the church's sole function since 1891 has been the perpetual adoration of the Holy Sacrament. Note the silver plaque, Gloria a María, signed by Dr. José Gregorio Hernández and dated 1897. Currently proposed for canonization, José Gregorio Hernández has long been regarded by many Venezuelans as a saint, even during his lifetime. He worked tirelessly among the sick of Caracas' poorest districts, often paying for his patients' medicine out of his own pocket. He was the first to introduce the microscope among his fellow doctors in Venezuela and vigorously encouraged scientific diagnosis in treating disease. Ever since his death in 1918, many miraculous cures have been attributed to his intervention, and pictures and statues of him are popularly sold for votive offerings.

PARKS AND GARDENS

Caracas has a number of parks and gardens scattered like small oases among the tall apartment and office blocks of the city.

Botanical Gardens
Universidad Central de Venezuela
From Plaza Venezuela, follow signs for Autopista Francisco Fajardo, cross Autopista access road, take the entrance to the university. The Botanical Gardens are immediately to the right.
Tel.: 61.9812
Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Daily)
Small parking lot just inside the entrance.

A spectacular garden of delights, with dense foliage and lush pathways past clusters of palm trees, cactus, and every imaginable tropical plant, all beautifully tended and clearly marked with handsome nameplates. There is no admission fee, but animals and picnicking are not allowed.

Mount Avila National Park
There are numerous trails up the mountain that overshadows Caracas. The *teleférico*, however, has been out of service for years. The government has announced plans to sell the state-owned cable car to a private company, but there has been no action so far. Operations remain suspended until further notice.

(For more information on the Avila, see "Sports," page 324.)

Parque del Este (Parque Rómulo Betancourt)
Entre La Floresta y La Carlota
Entradas en Avda. Francisco de Miranda, y Autopista Francisco Fajardo
Metro Parque del Este
Tel.: 284.3022/1090/8187/3266
Hours: 5:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Sunday)
5:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. For joggers, walkers, and runners (Monday)

A vast oasis of peaceful, cool greenery in the midst of bustling Caracas, Parque del Este's 500 acres offer something for everyone: A small zoo and terrarium (snake, reptile and amphibian house), an artificial lake with paddle boats for hire, a rubber-tire excursion train, the Humboldt Planetarium, playing fields, snack bars and picnic ares. A branch of the public library and an acoustic shell for concerts and other performances are located just inside the entrance on Avda. Francisco de Miranda. Broad paved pathways lead the stroller through handsome gardens and arbors replete with tropical foliage. The park is a popular rendezvous for early-morning joggers, runners and walkers who follow a 2.5-km. track. Admission charge is Bs.10 ($.11) for adults, with children half-price and parking at Bs.15 ($.16). No animals, bicycles, or roller skates are allowed.

Parque Los Caobos
Plaza Morelos
Tel.: 571.0421
Hours: Daily
Limited parking space in front of the museums, though it is also available at the underground parking lot of the Teatro Teresa Carreño or Hotel Caracas Hilton. Metro recommended.

Wide paved pathways form shady lanes, ideal for cycling, jogging and skate boarding. Once a coffee plantation, the park is named for the tall mahogany trees grown to shade the coffee plants. The huge fountain, moved from Plaza Venezuela, is illuminated at night and graced by orchids hanging high in the trees. The Museo de Bellas Artes, Museo de Ciencias Naturales and Galería de Arte Nacional are located at the western end of the park.

There is also a restaurant with a pleasant rooftop terrace, and bar service, next to the huge fountain.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

THE EVIL EYE - A beady-eyed iguana watches the world go by in Caracas' Plaza Bolívar.

Parque Los Chorros
Final de Avenida Cachimbo
Los Chorros
Tel.: 239.1886
Hours: 9:00 a.m - 6:30 p.m. (Tuesday to Sunday)
Ample parking

A bit of shady quiet woodland nestled in the foothills of Mount Avila, Parque Los Chorros boasts winding pathways, which follow a crystal-clear stream, and several picturesque waterfalls, for which the park is named. There are small picnic nooks, playground areas, benches for weary strollers and an outdoor restaurant. Species of trees and plants are identified with name tags. Admission is Bs.5 ($.05). No animals are allowed.

Paseo de Los Proceres (Círculo Militar)
Avda. Los Próceres
(Autopista El Valle, Exit: La Nacionalidad)
Tel.: 662.3111/3419
Hours: Daily
Ample parking

These are formal gardens for one of the most opulent officers' clubs in the world, created by Marcos Pérez Jiménez, who was dictator from 1952-58. The names of Venezuela's *próceres* or heroes are carved on two handsome marble pillars. The park is dotted with fountains and reflecting pools, statues and stone benches. There is also a broad promenade, lined with monuments to the country's revolutionary leaders. The viewing stands and parade grounds are filled on July 5th for the traditional annual Independence Day celebration.

Parque Zoológico de Caricuao
Caricuao
Tel.: 431.9166/204
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Tuesday to Sunday)
Parking: Bs.15 ($.16)

The Caricuao Zoological park is a showcase of gardens, lakes and mango-covered pathways, as well as a zoo where animals can roam in large enclosures meant to simulate their natural habitat. Today, functioning areas of the park are well designed and operating efficiently.

Peacocks stroll freely, *guacamayas* perch on stands and flamingoes and other birds grace the lakes and ponds. Giraffes, elephants, rhinoceros, lions, deer and snakes are currently on display. On Saturdays and Sundays, sightseeing trains with taped commentary take visitors on a complete tour of the park. There is an area where youngsters are allowed to touch a variety of goats and ducks. There is also a refreshment stand and picnic tables. No animals are allowed. Admission is Bs.10 ($.11) for adults, and Bs.5 ($.05) for children under age 3.

SHOPPING

Part of the fun of moving to a new place is discovering how and where the locals go to shop. In Caracas, as in most other places in the world, what you pay depends a lot on where you go - the less convenient, the less expensive. Many stores and some shopping centers are closed on Mondays - especially in the suburbs. Shops generally close for a long lunch break, and very few are open Sundays, though many small markets and bakeries or *panaderías* open for a few hours that day.

Payment can be made by check but each one usually has to be cleared by the bank first, a process that can take up to a half hour, depending upon the store's efficiency. Credit cards are also taken in larger establishments. However, cash shopping is far easier, since it allows purchases from stores as well as from the less-expensive street vendors.

SURVIVAL SHOPPING

GROCERIES

There are several chains of grocery stores, called *supermercados* or *automercados*, in Caracas, including CADA, Central Madeirense and La Victoria, as well as smaller, independent stores. The CADA chain is known for a wide selection of imported food items and household gadgets. All chains advertize weekly specials in the Spanish-language papers or in flyers at their entrances.

Two independent supermarkets worth special mention are the Supermercado Veracruz, Edif. La Hacienda, Avda. Veracruz, Las Mercedes (just before the intersection with the Avda. Principal), and Automercado San Lorenzo, Avda. Andrés Bello and Avda. Enrique Benaím

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©
STREET SALE - Local buhoneros sell their wares on the streets of Sabana Grande.

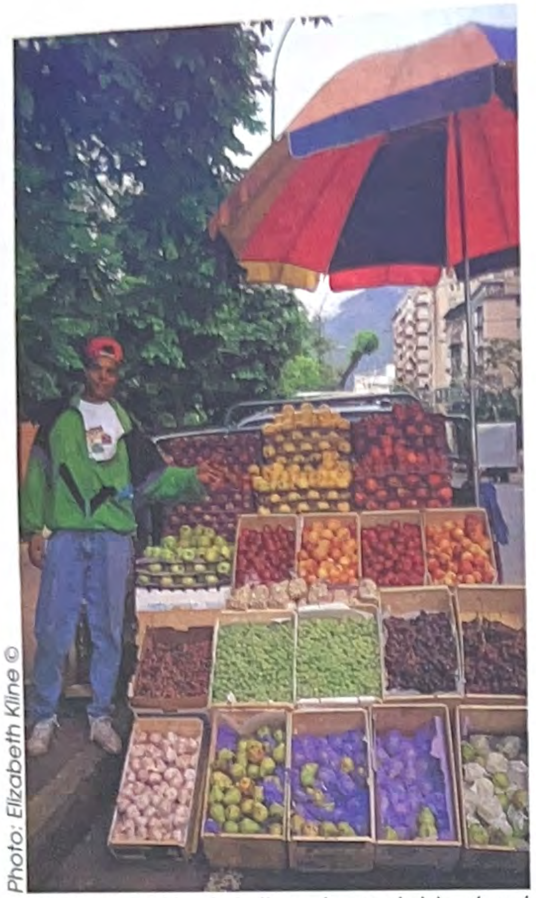


Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

FRUITFUL DAY - A fruit and vegetable stand provides a colorful sight on a city street.

Pinto, Los Palos Grandes. Having served the international communities of Caracas for years, these are known for carrying imported goods in good times and bad, even when unavailable elsewhere. Imported food items are also available in the basement of the department store, Maxy's. Also, since the opening of doors to imports, nearly every large supermarket either has a special section set aside for imports or scatter them among the other foods. However plentiful they might be, though, they are not inexpensive.

There is one tiny Chinese grocery store - Comercial Koc Chai, Avda. Gloria, between Avda. Principal and Avda. del Golf, El Bosque. It carries shrimp chips and tofu. An early Sunday morning open-air Chinese market is at the corner of Avda. Principal El Bosque and Avda. Gloria in Los Cedros, where one can find fresh Chinese vegetables, most of which are grown on contract near Aragua state, supplied with seeds by the Chinese community.

Besides the meat sections at supermarkets, many neighborhoods have a *frigorífico* where meat is sold. Cuts of meat are very different from those in the United States, since Venezuelan beef is range-fed and so is not as fatty or as tender. Pork is considerably more fatty, however. Charts and cooking guidelines can be obtained from the Newcomers Club or the Community Liason Office (CLO) at the U.S. Consulate.

Almost all neighborhoods have a *panadería*, a bakery that sometimes doubles as a corner deli, carrying baked goods (bread, pastries and cakes), sandwiches made to order and cheese or ham-filled pastries, which are called *cachitos*. Most are also a source of milk, juice, eggs and cheese.

For all sorts of fruit, vegetables, fish and eggs, there are a variety of trucks that serve each neighborhood. Usually they congregate at one corner or stretch of road once or twice a week, creating a small street market. The produce is usually much fresher and cheaper than at a grocery store. **(For more information on food, see "Appendix," page 463.)**

There are a number of kosher bakeries, delis and grocery stores concentrated in San Bernardino and Los Caobos. These include Eliat, Avda. Roraima con Cajigal, San Bernardino; Le Notre, Avda. Andrés Bello, Esquina de Los Manolos, Los Caobos; Kasher, Avda. Los Próceres, San Bernardino; Comercial Galipán, Avda. Roraima, Esquina Cajigal, San Bernardino; and Mini Market & Kosher Delicatessen, Avda. Bogotá and Avda. Libertador, Los Caobos.

The city's delicatessens offer a range of pastries, tarts, cheeses, meats, gourmet salads, vegetable and main dishes. Also known as *charcuterías*, they will usually fill special orders

for plates of hors d'oeuvres, entrées and cakes, as well as offering the standard fare of cheeses and cold cuts. Most are prepared to cater any large or small social event. These include:

Delicatessen Copenhagen (three locations):
Centro Comercial Paseo Las Mercedes
Nivel Azul
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.9708/0808
Fax: 92.9708
Specialties: Chicken in orange sauce, rabbit in wine sauce, garlic mushrooms, brandied tenderloin of beef, French and Italian wines, liquors and champagnes, homemade pasta.

Avda. Río de Janeiro entre Calle Trinidad y Calle Mucuchíes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.6940, 91.0605
Fax: 92.7852
Specialties: Homemade pasta; large selection of paté, mousse and quiche, Italian dishes, and pastries. Small outdoor café. Sunday brunch from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Catering.

3ra. Avda., en frente del Automercado Excelsior
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 284.9335

Frisco
Centro Comercial El Bosque
Avda. Libertador
El Bosque
Tel.: 71.5550/5662
Specialties: Chocolates, cured meats, prepared cheeses, homemade sausage and paté, creamed herring, varied produce.

La Casa Brioche
Calle Madríd
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.9481/6295
Specialties: Brioche, strudel, pastries and cakes, cognac paté, shrimp quiche, mero mousse, gourmet salads, pasta dishes, large selection of wines.

La Romanissima
Calle New York
Esquina de Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 751.8346
Specialties: Arabic salads, roast pork, homemade pastas, imported products, large wine selection, salmon, caviar, foods prepared to order.

Manhattan Plaza
Esquina de Calle San Marino y Calle Guaicaipuro
San Marino
Chacao
Tel.: 32.0067
Specialties: Salami, sausages, pizza, marinated fish dishes, shrimp salads, marinated mushrooms, strudels, stuffed chicken, pork tenderloin.

Rey David (two locations)
4ta. Transversal cerca de Avda. Andrés Bello
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 283.8011, 284.1790

Edif. Quilmes
Avda. Fermín Toro
San Bernardino
Tel.: 51.0064/0842, 52.6619
Specialties: Complete line of kosher products, large selection of imported items, patés, smoked fish (trout and salmon), cheeses, pastrami, bagels, wines, butcher shop with wide range of prepared meats including assorted shish-kabob. Home delivery.

DEPARTMENT STORES

There are two national chains of department stores, Beco and Maxy's, both with several branches in Caracas as well as in other cities. Maxy's, which was formerly associated with the Sears chain in the United States and is still referred to as Sears by some old-timers, is the more upscale of the two. Recommended for those homesick for a U.S. department store is Maxy's flagship store in Bello Monte. Both chains advertise sales every week in the Spanish-language newspapers.

BARGAIN HUNTING

The traditional recourse of the bargain hunter are the small *mayor y detal* or wholesale/retail shops in the center of the city between Capitolio and Avda. Fuerzas Armadas. However, while the prices are lower than at the big shopping malls, the service can be dismal, and a lot of walking is involved. Also in the center are a number of factory outlets, which are particularly good for shoes and clothing. Agents from the factory showrooms are everywhere on the streets in the center, ready to hand out cards with the shop's address or to show catalogs of its products.

There are two discount clubs/stores in Caracas. One is BJ's Club de Mayoristas at Edif. Yacambú, P.B., Avda. Sanatorio del Avila, Sector Montecristo, Boleíta Norte (Tel.: 238.7622/3344). The other is Makro, at Carretera Vieja Petare-Guarenas, La Urbina (Tel.: 242.2611/4011); branches will be opening in western Caracas and in Valencia. Only members or their guests can shop at either of these places, and there are minimum-quantity purchases for some items. Membership at Makro's is limited solely to companies and their representatives. Although there is no charge to join, one must present photocopies of the company's registration and names of staff members who are to receive membership cards.

Any number of household supplies, from laundry detergent to disposable diapers, can

also be found in warehouse or *galpón* facilities. To keep prices low, no bags or other frills are offered.

SHOPPING CENTERS AND MALLS

There are a number of large shopping centers, or *centro comericales*, and malls in Caracas. Most include a grocery store as well as other shops and movie theaters. The most up-scale are the Centro Comercial Ciudad Tamanaco, most commonly known as the CCCT, in Chuao, and the Paseo Las Mercedes in Las Mercedes.

Other large shopping centers include Concresa in Prados del Este; Centro Plaza in Los Palos Grandes; Plaza Las Américas in El Cafetal; Chacaíto in Chacaíto; and Unicentro El Marqués in El Marqués.

A short drive out of Caracas is Centro Comercial La Casona, Km. 16 Carretera Panamericana, San Antonio de los Altos.

STREET MARKETS

There are a number of street markets in Caracas, also known as *mercados populares*, which are good for people watching as well as bargain hunting. The produce is fresher than in the grocery stores, but prices for foodstuffs in general are not necessarily better. Most close around 1:00 p.m and the good produce goes earlier.

Street markets are held in Baruta on Saturday; Cementerio on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday; Coche on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday; El Cafetal (Avda. El Limón to Avda. El Morao) on Thursday; Guaicaipuro on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday; and at Quinta Crespo on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday.

Another good option is to check out the wares of the *buhoneros*, or street vendors, along Sabana Grande Boulevard or downtown near Capitolio or La Hoyada Metro stations. Though vendors are often the focus of irregular area-wide police sweeps, they always seem to return with their wares spread out on plastic sheets along the sidewalks.

SPECIALTY AND SOUVENIR STORES

ANTIQUES

Although Venezuela isn't exactly an antique collector's paradise, many attractive items can be found. There are still many genuine brass candlesticks from churches; wood carvings of saints or *santos* and *retablos*, or altarpiece paintings of saints. Other items include pieces of crystal and porcelain from a variety of countries, old apothecary jars, weights and balances, mortars and pestles, old military medals and coins and kerosene lamps. Spanish stirrups are popular, but most are copies, mass-produced in Colombia. Good antique shops are few and far between. One to try is A.E. Limes, Calle Girasol, Prados del Este (Tel.: 77.1570, 978.2780) for reproductions.

There are also various shops in Las Mercedes, such as El Fanal (Tel.: 752.4612/6396) on Avda. Principal, near Avda. Jalisco; Antiques 13 on Calle California at Monterrey; Galería Ocasiones at Avida. Orinoco and Avda. Jalisco; Windsor House Antiques at Calle Madríd near Calle Caroní (Tel. 91.2363) and Gale's Antique's at Calle Madríd at Veracruz (Tel.: 92.1520).

FOOD ITEMS

Venezuelan coffee makes a good souvenir. The high-quality chocolates are also a good gift for chocoholics, who should know that Venezuela's cacao bean - from which chocolate is made - is considered the best in the world.

Belgian-style specialty chocolates can be bought from La Praline, with an outlet at the CCCT; Kron, at the CCCT and La Bonita and San Moritz, at Paseo Las Mercedes and Centro Plaza.

Local rum is also cheap and the quality of the local brands of Pampero, Selecto and Cacique are as good as their Cuban, Jamaican and Puerto Rican competitiors.

FURNITURE STORES

Most new furniture is made to order and will take three to six weeks to deliver. Factory showrooms are concentrated along the highways headed out of Caracas, including the Carretera Panamericana at the entrance to San Antonio de Los Altos, and the roads to El Junquito, Santa Lucía and Guarenas. For patio furniture and kitchen table and chair sets, shops worth visiting are the Jardín del Arte and neighboring stores along Calle Las Mercedes and Chacao (the street that joins Chacao to the Autopista).

Other options are Decor Ilme, C.A., in the Centro Comercial La Casona, San Antonio de los Altos or Hannsi's in El Hatillo.

Rattan furniture is very popular, and less expensive than wooden or stuffed. There are many factories in the Caracas and Maracay areas, especially along the highway leading from Cagua toward La Villa de Cura, which will make an entire set to personal specifications.

Used furniture is available at moving sales advertised in newspapers, and at a number of used furniture stores in the Caracas area. Two with fairly wide selections are Quinta Bebé (Calle San Enrique, La Trinidad), which carries only furniture, and Quinta Palma (Calle Carabobo, El Rosal), which also has all sorts of household goods, antiques and collectibles.

GLASS AND CRYSTAL

A visit to the glass-blowing factories of Cristal Arte and Arte Murano, either to purchase some of the beautiful Venetian-style blown glass or to watch the artisans at work, makes a pleasant half-day excursion. Located off the Pan-American Highway near San Antonio de Los Altos, the factories have large gift shops featuring everything from beautifully blown sculptures to crystal ashtrays. Visitors can watch the glass being blown and shaped in both factories most days of the week, usually in the morning. Some travel agencies, including those at the larger hotels, offer daily bus tours to these factories.

The closest is Cristal Arte, located a little past the entrance to the Venezuelan Institute of Advanced Scientific Research, or IVIC, on the opposite side of the highway. It is closed Mondays, but operates from 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. on weekends (Tel.: 032.71.0273).

The other, Arte Murano, is about two km. south of San Antonio de Los Altos, in Potrerito. It is open daily 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., and 12:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. but the best time to watch glassblowers is during weekday mornings, since only one artisan usually works on weekends (Tel.: 032.72.0312).

HANDICRAFTS

Although Venezuela does not produce the quantity and variety of handicrafts of other Latin American countries, unique and well-made pieces can be found. Many *artesanía* shops in Caracas also sell imports from México, Colombia or Peru, though they are more expensive

here than in their country of origin. Venezuelan basketry, woven by the Indians of the Delta Amacuro, Amazonas region and the Gran Sabana, make excellent collectors' items. However, many baskets in Caracas stores are manufactured in Hong Kong or China.

A good place to start handicraft hunting is Pro-Venezuela, near the Plaza Venezuela Metro station. This Aladdin's cave features rustic blankets from the Andes, hammocks of all sizes, colors and material, necklaces, dolls, baskets from all regions, bows and arrows, hats, maracas, ponchos, purses and masks.

The Guajiro Indian market, off Boulevard Sabana Grande near Centro Comercial Chacaíto, is another popular place. Wildly colorful Guajiro tapestries are the main attraction at these outdoor stalls but there are also large cowhide rugs, baskets, and even mounted piranhas. On sale too are *mantas*, the loose, brightly colored robes worn by the Guajiro Indian women. Bargaining is possible at the market.

Several shops in the Paseo Las Mercedes shopping center may be worth a visit. El Taller de la Esquina has a full range of handicrafts, paintings, copper and brass items and some antiques. El Artesano is well-stocked with blankets, ponchos and a wide array of colorful items. Galería Cano specializes in quality replicas of pre-Hispanic jewelry and authentic pre-Columbian ceramics. Anyone buying originals should be sure they have all the papers to be able to take them out of the country legally. The boutique section called La Cuadra offers handmade orchids in gold and gold coins at T & J Joyas, as well as handicrafts at Artisanalia.

El Hatillo, a suburb of Caracas, is a mecca for shoppers and sightseers. A visit to Hannsi's is a must for anyone interested in purchasing Latin American crafts. The owners are originally from Germany, but speak very good English and are eager to help. There are numerous other shops in the town, with new stores opening up frequently. In the Las Marías section of El Hatillo is the ceramic workshop and exhibit of Barro y Fuego, a good place to locate one-of-a-kind gifts at reasonable prices.

For more "arty" items, the Museo de Bellas Artes, the Galería de Arte Nacional, the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, and the Teatro Teresa Carreño all house shops offering posters, art books, postcards, ceramics, masks and jewelry. **(For locations and operating hours, see "The Arts," page 290.)**

On weekends, the walk between the Ateneo de Caracas and Plaza Morelos is lined with vendors hawking handicrafts.

HARDWARE STORES

Every shopping center and neighborhood has at least one *ferretería*. These carry all sorts of hardware, tools and paint. They can recommend local help for electrical, plumbing or basic home construction projects.

Ferre-Total (Edif. Ferretotal, Calle Tiuna, Boleíta Norte) is a U.S.-style hardware store that features member discounts. Its proposed addition, Deco-Total, will carry such items as light fixtures.

HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

Discount vendors of large appliances (*electrodomésticos* or *línea blanca*) advertise in the Spanish-language papers, especially on weekends. Many familiar brand names are on sale. There is usually an extra charge for delivery. These items are also available, used, at moving sales.

JEWELRY

Gold can be an excellent buy in Venezuela if you know where to shop. The Fort Knox of Venezuelan jewelry is Edif. La Francia, on the southwest corner of Plaza Bolívar. This building houses nine floors of wholesale dealers in gold and silver, diamonds other gemstones and pearls. Finished articles in gold and silver sell for little more than the price of the precious metal used. Eighteen-karat gold is used for most jewelry, and items without stones are usually sold simply by weight.

It is wise to check out a couple of establishments beforehand or go with an experienced shopper who buys regularly. Particularly reliable is Mr. Leon Rosemblatt, at Joyería La Francia.

H. Stern, the leading South American jewelry concern, has stores in the Hotel Tamanaco Inter-Continental, Hilton Hotel and Eurobuilding Hotel, as well as at the airport in Maiquetía. Stern's is renowned for quality merchandise, but prices are high.

For something typically Venezuelan, the jewelry shopper might consider the orchid, Venezuela's national flower, whose shape can be fashioned into earrings, pins and pendants of various sizes. These orchids are handmade in different golds as well as in silver, most adorned with a seed pearl in the center.

LEATHER GOODS

Leather is a good buy in Venezuela, especially leather shoes. Some of the best shoe stores in the city are along Sabana Grande and in the CCCT, though the leather at the latter center is quite expensive. Factory outlets and other lower-priced work can be found in the old downtown areas and in the streets of Santa Cecilia, near Los Dos Caminos. Shoes manufactured in Venezuela only come in a medium width.

MATERNITY AND BABY STORES

There are a number of independent stores plus the chain Prenatal, which has a number of branches in town. Baby and children's furniture is made to order and imported strollers and car seats can be obtained at Baby Junior in La Tahona, at the end of the the unpaved one-lane extension of Avda. La Guairita.

MUSIC

Caracas offers a good selection of Latin music, from Venezuelan salsa to Bolivian flute music. Cassettes and records are relatively inexpensive, but CDs are costly. Most stores also carry a fair selection of the latest rock and jazz.

The Venezuelan four-stringed instrument, known as the *cuatro*, can be found at most artisan shops. Playing-quality *cuatros*, however, should be purchased from music stores.

OFFICE AND SCHOOL SUPPLY STORES

Books, school and office supplies, magazines, greeting cards and gift wrapping paper are sold at *librerías* or bookstores; *papelerías*, which carry mostly paper supplies; and *tarjeterías*, which carry mostly gift items. A *librería* may carry primarily office and gift supplies and school textbooks in the months before school starts. The chain Las Novedades has outlets in the Hotel Tamanaco Inter-Continental and Hotel Eurobuilding, as well as in shopping malls and at some of the Metro stations.

For real office supplies, including filing cabinets, La Carpeta is an option. It has three locations in Caracas: Maripérez (6th Transversal of Maripérez, inside the parking lot Caribe,

on the north side of Parque Arístides Rojas); Este 2 (Avda. Este 2, Edif. Morelos, local No. 8, near the Caracas Hilton); and Centro (Cruz Verde a Velásquez, Local No. 75).

Photocopy services are available in many photo supply stores and newsstands, as well as in copy centers. Self-service copying is not available. Some of the larger copy centers will do simple binding and have fax services.

PERFUMERIAS

There are two kinds of *perfumerías*. The first, represented by such chains as Sarela, Sarita, Más Por Menos, and La Princesa, as well as independent stores, carry all sorts of personal-care and household cleaning products, including disposable diapers and diaperwipes, hair dye, shampoo, deodorant, laundry detergent, makeup, toilet paper, toothpaste, toilet bowl cleaner and perfume or cologne. The mix depends on the outlet, and Sarela has separate branches that carry just makeup and perfumes.

The second kind of *perfumería*, readily identified by bundles of dried herbs and statuettes of saints, sells medicinal herbal mixes, good and bad luck potions and good luck charms.

SEWING SUPPLY STORES

Fabric stores surprisingly do not sell thread, zippers, buttons, trim, patterns or needlework supplies. These items are purchased at places advertising *mercería* and *adornos*, usually in the same area as fabric stores. The greatest concentration of fabric and trim shops is found in the Centro's clothing district, where the manufacturers' outlet shops are also plentiful, primarily along Este 2, north of Avda. Universidad.

The fabric store Selecta in the Paseo Las Mercedes specializes in designer fabrics for special-occasion clothing.

VIDEOS

"Expedition," a popular Venezuelan TV series featuring the country's natural wonders and wildlife, is widely available in Beta or VHS in Spanish. Some of the volumes have been dubbed in English.

Subscribe to the award-winning monthly magazine

Business
Venezuela

To subscribe, call:
The Publications Department
263.0833

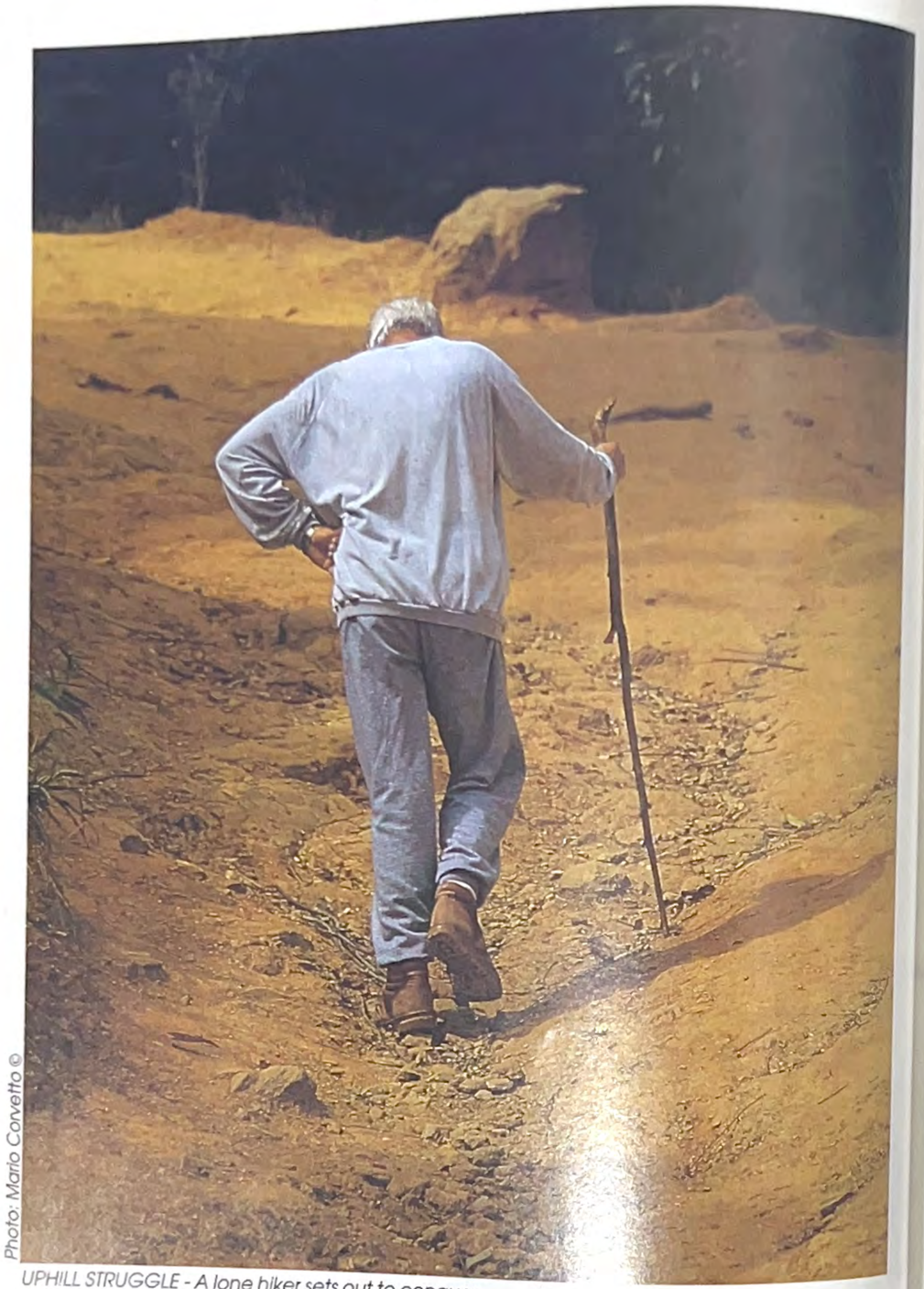


Photo: Mario Corvetto ©

UPHILL STRUGGLE - A lone hiker sets out to conquer the Avila in Caracas.

SPORTS AND RECREATION

COUNTRY CLUBS

Sports-minded newcomers looking forward to a hearty game of tennis or a brisk swim under tropical azure skies and dazzling sunshine may be disappointed to find that there are few public sports facilities in Caracas. Instead, there is a complex system of private clubs, offering members and their families facilities to play sports and meet socially for parties, bridge tournaments, meals and various forms of organized entertainment.

Membership of these clubs is limited, and those wanting to join can do so only by buying the "share" of a departing member. Shares are sold on the open market, and are advertised in local newspapers. In addition to the basic asking price, which is determined by supply and demand, the prospective buyer is often responsible for half or all of the *traspaso* or transfer fee.

Although club shares vary widely in value, newcomers unprepared for the current market prices may be unpleasantly surprised. Shares at both Valle Arriba Golf Club and Lagunita Country Club, for example, may sell for more than Bs.4,000,000 ($43,956.04). The Caracas Country Club is in an even higher bracket, with shares hitting Bs.10,000,000 ($109,890.10 each. Membership of the Caracas Sports Club, Caraballeda Golf and Yacht Club, or the Izcaragua Country Club is less expensive, in the Bs.2,000,000 - Bs.8,000,000 ($21,978.02 - $87,912.87) range. The Altamira Tennis Club and El Junko Golf Club are among the most reasonably priced, averaging Bs.550,000 ($6,043.95) a share.

Occasionally, club members may choose to rent, rather than sell their shares. Lagunita Country Club also offers shares for rent directly from the club, drastically reducing the initial outlay and eliminating the transfer fee. More information can be obtained from the club (Tel.: 963.6603 961.1401).

Those who wish to buy should be forewarned that club shares are big business and subject to unscrupulous speculation. Although most people prefer to act on a one-to-one basis with a buyer who intends to become a club member, there are professional brokers who buy shares in bulk, paying a percentage of the selling price with the hope of reselling at a handsome profit.

A club membership share represents a great deal of money, but many consider it a wise investment, both in monetary terms, and in terms of physical and mental well-being. Caracas is an overcrowded, fast-paced, high-tension city, and foreigners and Venezuelans alike find it useful to have a healthy outlet for unwinding after a hard day's work.

Once club shares are purchased, the complicated procedure begins, involving the collection of signatures for sponsorship from existing members. Prospective members may also need personal and bank references. While the purchasing and transfer procedures are being handled, the prospective member is briefed on club rules and regulations. The names and photos of prospective members and their families are posted in the clubhouse during this transition to inform other members of the impending share transfer, and to ensure that there are no objections. A waiting period of 15 to 20 days is to be expected.

Most clubs have one sport they are noted for, whether it be golf, tennis, horseback riding, squash or sailing. Almost all have swimming pools, usually with a shallow end, or a separate wading pool for children. Other common features are extensive gardens and playgrounds for children, a snack bar and/or restaurant and meeting facilities.

Clubs at the beach, either on the Litoral or further away in Higuerote or Puerto La Cruz,

CARACAS COUNTRY CLUBS

	Country Club	Lagunita	Valle Arriba	Caraballeda
Membership cost	Bs.10,000,000	Bs.4,500,000	Bs.5,000,000	Bs.1,500,000
Swimming pool	✧	✧	✧	✧
Playing field	✧			
Jogging/tennis	✧			
Gym	✧	✧	✧	✧
Massage	✧	✧	✧	✧
Sauna/steam bath	✧	✧	✧	✧
Horse riding	✧			✧
Golf	✧	✧	✧	✧
Jacuzzi				
Playground	✧	✧	✧	✧
Card rooms	✧	✧	✧	✧
Conference rooms	✧	✧	✧	✧
Restaurant	✧	✧ (3)	✧	✧
Chapel	✧			
Marina				
Telephone	261.0867	963.6603	91.2244	(031) 94.0685
Area	Country Club	La Lagunita	Valle Arriba	La Guaira

offer most of the advantages of a privately-owned vacation home without many of the hassles of maintenance and security. In addition to beach areas, these clubs normally have swimming pools, playing fields for various sports, marinas, and overnight accommodation. On weekends and during holiday periods, there are planned activities for children.

In some cases, it is also possible to own an apartment within the grounds of a club. One popular choice is Club Puerto Azul in the Litoral (Tel.: 91.13333/1110/1510), with shares starting at Bs.650,000 ($7,142.85) and the *traspaso* at Bs.90,000 ($989.01). Discounted sleeping facilities are available here. Other clubs are Club Tanaguarena in the Litoral (Tel.: 751.1297/3913) and Aguasal in Higuerote (Tel.: 263.4883, 32.0912/6902).

Izcaragua	Junko	Altamira Tennis Club	Club Hipico	Caracas Theater Club
Bs.800,000	Bs.550,000	Bs.2,700,000	Bs.300,000	Bs.200,000
✧ (4)	✧	✧	✧	✧
✧	✧	✧	✧	
		✧	✧	✧
✧		✧	✧	✧
✧		✧	✧	
✧	✧	✧	✧	
			✧	
✧	✧			
	✧			
✧				
✧	✧			✧
✧	✧		✧	
✧	✧	✧	✧	✧
✧	✧			
✧				
(036) 22.5181	(033) 21.223	33.5915/4718	979.0022	91.0011
Parque Caiza	El Junkito	Altamira	Prados del Este	San Román

GYMS

For those interested in getting or keeping in shape, there are numerous fitness centers throughout Caracas. Some specialize in particular types of workouts or are only for adults, but the principal ones offer various options and have open membership.

The list of gyms is endless, but the ones noted below have been recommended. For access to the facilities, there is an initial non-refundable inscription cost, followed by monthly fees. Several gyms give special discounts for advanced payments, groups or families and for use during non-peak hours.

Aventura Caracas Hotel Spa
Avda. Sorocaima con Avda. Fco. Fajardo
San Bernardino
Tel.: 51.4011/2022
Hours: 6:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday)
Facilities: Aerobics, weights, multi-force machines, sauna, massage and use of the hotel's pool.
Fees: Bs.2,000 ($21.97) inscription, Bs.1,200 ($13.18) monthly.

Central Spa Nautilus
Final Avda. Lecuna
Edif. Apartamiento, Nivel G
El Conde
Tel.: 574.9611
Hours: 11:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Saturday)
Facilities: Exercise machines, aerobics, jogging track, massage, weights, three racquetball courts, sauna, steam bath, jacuzzi, billiard and pool tables, sports shop, snack bar and restaurant.
Fees: For payment by cash, there is an initial fee of Bs.7,500 ($82.41) plus monthly payments of Bs.2,800 ($30.76). Credit payment costs Bs.5,500 ($60.43) for each of the first three months, with a regular monthly fee of Bs.2,800 ($30.76).

Fitness
Edif. Mene Grande, Local 2, PB
Avda. Fco. de Miranda
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 283.2422, 285.0664/3708
Hours: 6:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Saturday)
Facilities: Aerobics, multi-force machines, weights, karate, steam baths, massages.
Fees: Basic inscription of Bs.4,000 ($43.95), with discounts for married couples, groups, students, youths and advance payment. Monthly fees are Bs.2,100 ($23.07) for unlimited use and Bs.1,800 ($19.78) for use between 6:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. only.

Gimnasio Marcello Planchart
Al lado del Centro Comercial Paseo Las Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.9991
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Saturday)
Facilities: Features karate, aerobics, weights, workout, directed gym and use of multi-force machines, massage.
Fees: Bs.1,500 ($16.48) inscription, with a monthly fee of Bs.1,500 ($16.48).

Gold's Gym
Centro Comercial La Bonita, Piso 3
Final de Calle La Guarita
La Bonita
Tel.: 941.6064/2250
Hours: 6:00 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Saturday)
Facilities: Aerobics, weights and workout machines.
Fees: Inscription is Bs.3,000 ($32.96), with half price for children under 12; monthly fee of Bs.1,800 ($19.78). Special discounts are given for advance payment and inscription of two or more people.

Gym Center
Centro Comercial Los Campitos
Los Campitos
Tel.: 978.0968
Hours: 7:00 a.m - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
Facilities: Aerobics, directed gym, multi-force machines, sauna, steam bath and massage.
Fees: Bs.4,500 ($49.45) for the first two-month period and Bs.5,600 ($61.53) per three-month period thereafter.

Hotel Tamanaco Gym
Hotel Tamanaco Inter-Continental
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.1124
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Saturday)
Facilities: Aerobics, weights, multi-force machines, massage, sauna and steam bath.
Fees: Bs.5,000 ($54.94), with monthly fees of Bs.2,400 ($26.37).

Jazzy
2da. Avda. entre 5ta. y 6ta. Transversal
Los Palos Grandes
Quinta Armida
Tel.: 283.9201
Hours: 6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
One aerobics class only at 11:00 a.m. (Saturday)
Facilities: Aerobics, gym, weights, multi-force machines, karate, jazz dance.
Fees: Bs.2,500 ($27.47) inscription, with a monthly rate of Bs.1,750 ($19.23).

Nautilus CCCT
Centro Ciudad Comercial Tamanaco
Torre D, Piso 2
Tel.: 262.2227
Hours: 6:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. (Monday to Saturday)
Facilities: Aerobics, weights and multi-force machines.
Fees: Bs.3,000 ($32.96) inscription, with a monthly charge of Bs.2,000 ($21.97).

Top Bel Gym
Hotel Caracas Hilton
Avda. Libertador y Sur 25
El Conde
Tel.: 571.0035
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Saturday)
Facilities: Aerobics, weights, multi-force machines, sauna, steam bath and massage.
Fees: Bs.5,000 ($54.94) inscription, with a monthly charge of Bs.2,000 ($21.97). Discounts are given for two people joining at the same time.

Top Spa
Edif. Seguros La Paz
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Tel.: 34.1769/9618/8898
Hours: 6:30 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Weekends and holidays)
Facilities: Aerobics, weights, multi-force machines, sauna, steam bath, tennis, squash, racquetball, jogging track and massage.
Fees: Bs.5,500 ($60.43) inscription for women, Bs.6,500 ($71.42) for men; and a monthly fee of Bs.3,100 ($34.06). Discounts are given for part-time usage and families.

Valle Arriba Athletic Club
Avda. Prinicipal Colinas de Valle Arriba
Colinas de Valle Arriba
Tel.: (014) 27.9678/9765
Hours: 6:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
9:00 a.m - 4:00 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday)
Facilities: Swimming, aerobics, multi-force machines, weights, track and field, cardiovascular center, multi-purpose fields (volleyball, basketball), Olympic gym, dance, jogging, massage, sauna and steam bath.
Fees: Bs.23,300 ($256.04) inscription, with a monthly fee of Bs.4,000 ($43.95). An inflation-proof plan offers unlimited annual use for Bs.75,000 ($824.17), with discounts for family members.

Workout
Avda. Mohedano
La Castellana
Tel.: 33.0910
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
Facilities: Offers low-impact aerobics.
Fees: Bs.2,500 ($27.47) inscription, with a monthly charge of Bs.2,500 ($27.47).

SPORTING EVENTS

BASEBALL

Baseball is the most popular sport in Venezuela, attracting crowds of loyal, rowdy fans who root for local teams, dance to their own bands (there are no stadium organs in Venezuela) and wave homemade banners. Even those who don't make it to the ballpark follow their team from season to season via television, radio and newspaper reports.

The local professional league is active from October to February, the so-called winter ball season, with eight teams organized in two divisions. Two teams, the Leones de Caracas and the Tiburones de la Guaira, call Caracas home, and there are also teams based in Maracaibo, Valencia, Barquisimeto, Maracay, Puerto La Cruz and Cabimas.

Games in Caracas are played at the baseball stadium at Universidad Central. Tickets are sold in the morning before each game and the best seats sell for about Bs.200 ($2.19). Ticket purchase should be before 7:00 a.m. or 8:00 a.m., when the line forms for the booths, which open at 9:00 a.m. Scalpers usually sell tickets for about twice their face value. In either case, particular zones can be selected but not the specific seat. For games between traditional rivals, such as Leones de Caracas and Navegantes del Magallanes, the ticket booths open as early as 6:00 a.m. and sell out quickly.

Each year, Venezuelan teams hire a number of North American players from AAA or AA teams - many of whom go on to major league stardom. Well-known players such as Dave Parker and Darryl Strawberry have played in the Venezuelan league. Pat Borobers, named Most Valuable Player of the 1992 World Series, has played for the team Cardenales de Lara.

As a result of the close ties between local and North American teams - such as those between Cardenales de Lara and the Toronto Blue Jays, or the Navegantes del Magallanes and the Pittsburgh Pirates - many Venezuelan players have gone on to play in the major league. The most remarkable Venezuelan to date has been Hall-of-Famer Luis Aparicio, with an 18-year career. Some of his records as shortstop are still in place.

Beside the professional winter league, there are also summer and minor league organizations. Corporación Criollitos (for boys only) is a national organization equivalent to Little League in the U.S. (Tel.: 892.569).

BASKETBALL

Basketball is the second most popular sport in Venezuela. The professional basketball league is composed of eight teams - two in Caracas, and one each in Maracaibo, Valencia, Barquisimeto, Maracay, Puerto La Cruz and Porlamar. Most games are televised.

A local team was the 1992 South American champion, and Venezuela had a very good performance at the pre-Olympic meet in Portland, Ore. One Venezuelan, Carl Herrera, plays with the Houston Rockets, a member of the National Basketball Association.

BOWLING

There are several bowling alleys in Caracas and many community organizations have formed leagues. The Children's Service League (CSL) group meets Thursday from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. at the Humboldt Bowling Alley in Prados Del Este. The group's season runs from mid-September to June (Tel.: 93.9923).

Another popular bowling alley is Pin 5 in La California, located in C.C. Puerta del Este, Avda. Francisco de Miranda (Tel.: 239.0845, 238.3701).

There is also a bowling alley in the Centro Comercial La Florida.

BULLFIGHTS

Bullfights in Caracas are held in the Plaza de Toros Nuevo Circo on Sunday afternoons during the season, held from November to March. Local newspapers have exact dates and times. The bullring is on Avda. Lecuna, one block east of Avda. Fuerzas Armadas, near La Hoyada Metro station.

However, Maracay is the real bullfighting capital of Venezuela during the same season. Its bullring, La Maestranza, also called Plaza de Toros César Girón for one of the city's greatest bullfighters, is located on Avda. 19 de Abril. Schedules can be obtained in advance (Tel. 043.21.108).

CAVE EXPLORING

In 1950, there were only 45 caves registered in Venezuela, but now there are more than 1,300, of which some 600 have been explored. In Caracas itself, there are 22 caves in El Cafetal in an area that has been declared a municipal park.

Venezuela's largest cave is La Cueva del Guácharo, which extends 10.2 km (6 miles) in the Parque Nacional El Guácharo, near Caripe in Monagas state. The park is open year-round to visitors, and the on-site Museo Humboldt houses extensive information about the cave and many exhibits contributed by the Venezuelan Society of Natural Sciences.

Amateur spelunkers should beware because cave exploring can be dangerous and hazardous. For exploring in groups, contact the Grupo Espeleológico of the Sociedad Venezolana de Ciencias Naturales (Tel.: 22.4812) or the Grupo Espeleológico of the Universidad Simón Bolívar (Tel.: 963.3022, 93.4301).

DANCING

Venezuelans love to dance, illustrated by the numerous dance spots throughout Caracas. In addition to salsa and merengue, the favorites among younger dancers, certain parts of the country have their own local dances. In Maracaibo, for example, locals dance to the lively *gaita* music, usually associated with the Christmas season. In the *llanos*, locals dance the foot-stomping *joropo*.

For the foreigner visiting or living in the country and wanting to learn the traditional dances, including the Spanish flamenco, there are a number of classes offered, including:

Academia de Baile
Entre las esquinas de Veroes y Jesuita
Edif. Paz de Cali
No.26, Piso 4
El Centro
Tel.: 562.7146

Classes are held at various times between 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m, Monday through Friday, for anyone from age 12 and older. Rates vary, but the average cost per five-hour course is Bs.3,500 ($38.46) or Bs.6,000 ($65.93) for 10 classes.

Academia de Baile Maribel y Argenis
Quinta Mi Rinconcita
Avda. Los Mangos
La Florida
Tel.: 74.9630

Private lessons or small classes of up to six people are held in the dance studio, with male and female instructors. Cost is Bs.500 ($5.49) for inscription and Bs.2,500 ($27.47) for five hours of classes, which can be arranged according to the client's schedule, from 11:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m., Monday to Thursday.

Milagros Egui
Tel.: (016) 23.4643, or messages at 74.2069
Workout Gym
Calle Mohedano
La Castellana
Private or group lessons

Classes are on Tuesday and Thursday at 9:30 a.m. or on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday at 8:15 p.m. Inscription is Bs.2,500 ($27.47) and a monthly fee is Bs.2,200 ($24.17) for classes twice weekly.

Private lessons can be arranged at the client's choice of time and place. Cost is Bs.2,500 ($27.47) per hour for any number of people.

FISHING

The best freshwater fishing season is from December through May in the nation's rivers, during the dry season. Fishing in the Guri reservoir and some of the other reservoirs is year-round, though different licenses are required for these two types of fishing. The permit to fish in the National Parks is $20 (Bs.1.820) for a non-resident, and Bs.550 ($6.04) for a resident. Here, peacock bass or *pavón* can only be fished from Nov. 1 to April 30.

Some of the best rivers are in the Llanos, including the three main ones of the Capanaparo, Cunaviche and Cinaruco. The *pavón* is the favorite fish, similar to the wide-mouth bass found in the United States but much more unpredictable and aggressive. It usually weighs from 10 to 15 pounds, but larger ones of up to 20 or more pounds can be found in the rivers in the southern part of the state of Amazonas.

Rivers and lakes around Mérida abound in trout. The river trout tend to be smaller (up to eight pounds) and are difficult to fish due to natural obstacles in the streams, such as steep descents and rocky river beds. The trout in Mérida's 200 or so lakes are larger (up to 24 pounds) but tend to congregate in the middle of the lakes, so a boat is required. Fishermen heading for Mérida should remember that warm clothing is a must, since the lakes are located 9,000 to 15,000 feet above sea level.

Deep sea fishing includes blue and white marlin, sailfish, dorado, tuna and wahoo. A serious angler has a fair chance of catching all these in the season, which runs from September to January. Tarpon and snook are fished in areas such as the Laguna de Tacarigua and Delta Amacuro. Bonefish are abundant in the flats of the Los Roques Archipiélago and in Morrocoy National Park.

Venezuela is becoming an increasingly popular destination for fishing vacations. Additional information on these can be obtained from Alpi Tours (Tel.: 283.1433/9837).

GOLF

There are no public golf courses in the Caracas area. Some of the private golf clubs can be used by tourists (or other non-member non-guests) for a fee. Most clubs are open only for members and occasionally their guests on weekends and holidays; some courses are closed

Mondays for maintenance. Members of clubs belonging to the Federación Venezolana de Golf may obtain special rates when playing as a guest at a club other than their own.

The Caracas Country Club is not open to non-members unless accompanied by members.

The following chart gives information on those clubs open to non-members:

GOLFING IN CARACAS

CLUB	NUMBER OF HOLES	DRIVING RANGE	TOURIST PRICE
Caraballeda Golf and Yacht Club (031) 94.0685	9	✧	Bs.1,500 ($16.48) Weekdays only
Izcaragua (036) 22.5181 Tues-Fri only	18	✧	Bs.4,550 ($50)
Junko (033) 21.223 telephone in advance	18	✧	Bs.2,500 ($27.47) Weekdays
Lagunita 963.6603	18	✧	Bs.4,550 ($50)
Valle Arriba 91.2244	18		Bs.4,550 ($50)

A new addition to the golf scene is the Caracas Driving Range in Macaracuay. Open from 5:30 a.m. - 11:00 p.m., this club offers a driving range, putting green, bar and changing rooms. The cost is Bs.65,000 ($714.85) for an annual individual membership and Bs.145,000 ($1,593.40) for a corporate membership. Monthly memberships run Bs.1,900 ($20.87) for an individual and Bs.3,600 ($39.56) for corporations. More information can be obtained at 285.2242/0935.

The Federación Venezolana de Golf (Tel.: 731.0553, 74.2731) can provide information about other golf facilities in Caracas and elsewhere in the country.

HIKING AND CLIMBING

The favorite hiking spot nearest the city is Mount Avila. For Venezuelans, climbing the Avila, and being seen climbing it at the weekend, is an institution. The young don their best gym outfits, with women wearing full makeup for this popular social pastime.

Year-long passes, which allow the cardholder to be accompanied by nine other persons, are available for a nominal fee at the National Parks Institute office at Parque Rómulo Betancourt (Parque del Este). Due to incidents of crime and assault, individuals, particularly women, are advised not to walk the Avila alone.

There are numerous trail heads at the base of the mountain. A popular and moderate hike begins in Altamira just beyond Tarzilandia Restaurant near the end of Avda. San Juan Bosco,

on the 10th Transversal. This slow, precipitous hike to Sabas Nieves, a park-like grassy area, takes about 40 minutes. The trail is well defined and tennis shoes are adequate. The park offers a rest area, but climbers can continue, though only if they sign in at the park office.

For those who want to venture further afield, joining the Centro Excursionistas de Caracas may be an answer. Members meet every Saturday to plan excursions for the beginner, intermediate and advanced hiker (Tel.: 292.3747).

HORSE RACING

Caracas boasts an excellent racetrack - La Rinconada - located at the end of Autopista de El Valle. On Saturdays and Sundays, there are 12 races in the afternoon, between 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Visitors can make their way to Section B, which offers a view of both paddocks, covered and open-air. Gentlemen are required to wear ties in Section B; ladies also should be suitably dressed. There is a refreshment stand and, in the upper tiers, an elegant restaurant, for members only. The excitement and colorful pageantry of La Rinconada make it a favorite place for sports enthusiasts. It is not unusual to see whole families enjoying an afternoon at the races, especially on Sundays.

Venezuelans are enthusiastic bettors, and visitors will find it hard not to catch the fever. In addition to a wide variety of bets made at the track windows, there is a popular off-track system called the 5 and 6 (*el cinco y seis*). This consists of attempting to pick at least five winners of Sunday's last six races. Several million bolívars are at stake, divided among those lucky enough to choose the winning horses. Official 5 y 6 betting stands may be found scattered around Caracas on Sunday mornings. The bettor may mark as many possible winners on the form, but the cost of the bet rises sharply as the number of horses chosen in race No. 7 is multiplied by the number of horses chosen in race No. 8, and so on, up to the 12th race.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

CHECKING IT OUT - Onlookers watch one of the street chess games in Caracas' Sabana Grande.

The Museo de Arte Alejandro Otero is located at the entrance of the racetrack grounds. Hours are from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Tuesday to Friday; and from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday.

HUNTING

Since jaguar hunting was banned in Venezuela, local hunters have had to search for less glamorous game. The most popular legal game now is the *báquiro* or wild pig, of which there are two varieties. The smaller one, *báquiro*

chácharo, grows to up to 35 pounds (15.75 kg) and is more common in the *llanos* region. The larger one, *báquiro cachete blanco*, can weigh up to 80 pounds (36 kg) and is usually found in the thick woodlands south of the Orinoco River.

Duck hunters flock to the Llanos during duck season, which runs from May to February. Permits and information about the variety of species can be obtained from the Ministerio del Ambiente (Tel.: 483.3164). Currently, hunting permits are issued only to those who have a *cédula* or national identity card. Hunting is not permitted on a tourist visa.

JOGGING AND WALKING

Although just a few years ago anyone running in Caracas was viewed with suspicion, today the sport has become a popular pasttime, with devotees cutting across age, sex and class lines. An early-morning visit to Parque del Este will verify the sport's popularity, as hundreds of joggers, runners, and walkers circle a measured 2,500-meter (2,750 yards) loop around the park.

The Cota Mil highway, which runs along the foothills of Mt. Avila, and Paseo Colón (from just west of Plaza Venezuela to the Teatro Teresa Carreño) are closed to traffic on Sundays from 6:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., from Distribuidor Baralt in the west to El Marqués in the east. Skateboard enthusiasts, roller skaters, joggers, walkers, runners and cyclists join each other in a mass flow of movement.

If running is a loner's sport, nobody has told the Caracas Hash House Harriers (Tel.: 751.5542). This offbeat group meets twice a month to follow a 5-8 kilometer (3-4.8 miles) trail through a chosen Caracas neighborhood. Their runs are more social than competitive, and the only trophy awarded at the end of the course is a cold beer. Meeting places and contact numbers are announced in The Daily Journal's community calendar, and a small sum covers the group's fortnightly "liquidity" requirements.

SCUBA DIVING

For experienced certified divers, the informal group Caraquáticos offers group excursions several times a month to various diving spots. Andrés Ikoldy-Scabo, who speaks English and has been a member of the group for more than 15 years, labels the group "conservation-oriented." Members dive only to observe and photograph seascapes, not to hunt marine life. Membership is limited to those who are certified divers already (Tel.:32.7162/0654).

For those who want to learn to dive, Marina Divers (Tel.:261.2286, 263.2286) offers three- to four-week courses for Bs.12,500 ($137.36), which feature practice dives in swimming pools and an outing in the sea at the end of the course. Sexto Continente (Tel.: 74.3873) is a professional tourism group that specializes in organized diving trips to various Venezuelan diving hotspots, such as Los Roques.

SNORKELING, SURFING AND WINDSURFING

Venezuela's Caribbean location makes it a paradise for many watersports, particularly snorkeling and surfing. Unfortunately, the beaches closest to Caracas along the Litoral are by and large contaminated by sewage and other pollution. Driving east or west, however, one can find beaches ideal for snorkeling, surfing and other water sports.

Favorite snorkeling spots include Morrocoy and Mochima national parks, Chichiriviche de la Costa and the Puerto La Cruz area, all between four and five hours' drive from Caracas. Surfers will find moderate waves all along Venezuela's coast. A favorite hangout is Cuyagua beach, beyond Cata.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

HOME RUN - A jogger takes a run on one of the beaches of the Litoral.

Windsurfing has caught on in Venezuela, and several shops around Caracas sell equipment. Most windsurfing enthusiasts practice their sport in Morrocoy National Park, or around the Higuerote and Puerto La Cruz areas. Margarita is also a favorite spot.

TENNIS

There are very few public tennis courts in Caracas. However, one private club, the Federación Venezolana de Tenis (Tel.:979.9291/2421), rents courts to the public by the hour.

DINING OUT

Eating out has been called the favorite sport in Caracas, where a tempting variety of restaurants offers everything from typical *criollo* cooking to Thai.

Many restaurants are open for lunch between noon and 3 p.m. and for dinner, starting at 7:00 p.m. Others offer continuous service from noon - midnight. The most popular places tend to fill up rapidly and if reservations are not made on busy evenings, it is not uncommon to wait an hour before being seated. Many restaurants are closed on either Sundays or Mondays.

Despite rising food costs, prices are reasonable in dollar terms, with a good, three-course meal for two costing less than $50 (Bs.4,550). Middle-of-the-road establishments have menus with meals available at about $10.98 (Bs.1,000) per person. Liquor bills have increased substantially in recent years and can easily top food costs, especially if imported wines and whiskeys are ordered. A 10 percent service charge is automatically included in the bill, and another 10 percent is expected as a tip.

Special menus are often offered by gourmet restaurants and those in five-star hotels as part of food and cultural festivals, many of which are announced in The Daily Journal.

Very few restaurants have no-smoking areas but most of the more casual establishments are equipped to handle young children. Generally speaking, children are more welcome in the early evening hours than during the more popular dining hours after 8:00 p.m. Many restaurants, both formal and casual, open their doors for family dining on Sundays and offer special menus and prices that day.

The parking areas outside Caracas restaurants tend to be small. Drivers hand their keys over to car valets, whose job is to find a space for customers' cars. Newcomers may at first find this system a bit disconcerting, especially since it appears contrary to common car security advice. When the customer is ready to leave, the car valet will fetch the car and deliver it to the door. A tip of Bs.20 ($.21) is considered correct.

The following list constitutes a selection of some of the better-known eating establishments in Caracas. Those restaurants marked with an asterisk are well-established and have remained popular over the years. Price range categories A through E are based on the approximate per-person cost of a meal, excluding cocktails and wine.

For a more comprehensive list, the Guía Gastronómica de Caracas, published by Miro Popic, is a useful bilingual survey of the Caracas restaurant scene. Price is Bs.1,000 ($10.98).

PRICE KEY

A= $35 or more (Bs.3,185)
B= $35 - $25 (Bs.3,185-Bs.2,275)
C= $25 - $15 (Bs.2,275-Bs.1,365)
D= $15 - $10 (Bs.1,365-Bs.910)
E= $10 or less (Bs.910)

*** Recommended, established restaurants**

AMERICAN

Coffee Shop - "La Terraza"
Hotel Tamanaco Inter-Continental
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 208.7111
Price range: B
Sunday breakfast buffet, daily health buffet

Dallas Texas Café
Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 993.4418/6364
Price range: C

La Brasserie
Centro Comercial Paseo Las Mercedes
Level Trasnocho
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.7646, 92.0092
Price range: C

L'Attico
Avda. Luis Roche entre Fco.
Miranda y 2da. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 261.2819/4739
Price range: C
Light menu; Sunday brunch.

***Lee Hamilton Steak House**
Avda. San Felipe
Esquina con Avda. El Bosque
La Castellana
Tel.: 32.5227, 261.0511/3469
Price range: B

Weekends
Avda. San Juan Bosco
y 2da. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 261.3839
Price range: B
Video, live music; varied events, including bingo and karaoke; light menu.

Weekends American Deli
(several branches throughout the city)
Altamira, Avda. San Juan Bosco
Las Mercedes, Avda. Veracruz
Edif. Torreón
CCCT, Nivel C-1; 2da. Etapa, La Feria;
El Hatillo, Frente la Plaza Bolívar
Casual: Price range C

ARABIAN

Cleopatra
Avda. Principal y
Santa Clara
El Bosque
Tel.: 71.8773, 731.1769
Price range: D
Dancers

Damasco
Calle Guaicaipuro
Centro Metropolitano
Chacao
Tel.: 33.6695/8458
Price range: C

El Rincón del Medio Oriente
Calle El Retiro
Quinta Flor
El Rosal
Tel.: 33.4064/4653
Price range: B
Dancers

Gazebo
Avda. Río de Janeiro
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.9502, 91.9258
Price range: B
Gourmet Arabic with some international offerings

Kibbe Steak
Calle Madrid y Mucuchíes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.0519/6768
Price range: C
Dancers

Alimentos con 100 años de garantía.

¿Qué familia venezolana
no ha tenido Underwood en su mesa?
Y es que son más de 100 años
de tradición y calidad Underwood,
creciendo con las necesidades
y gustos de cada generación.
Su preferencia en el tiempo
es nuestra mejor garantía para ofrecerle
"la forma más sabrosa de comer"

Diablitos Venezolanos, C.A.

CHINESE

Only fried rice appears on the menu; since white rice is not normally served, it must be requested if desired.

***El Palmar**
Plaza Lincoln
Colinas de Bello Monte
Tel.: 751.4442, 752.4568
Price range: B
Specialty: Peking Duck

Gran China
Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes,
Cerca de Calle Orinoco
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.4023, 92.2042/2043
Price range: B

Mee Nam
Avda. Luis Roche entre
3ra. y 4ta. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 262.1685, 261.0549
Price range: C

Mr. Lee Chow
Avda. Río de Janeiro
y Calle Mucuchíes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 752.6335
Price range: B

***Nueva China**
Avda. Principal
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 752.6198, 751.6884
Price range: C

COFFEE HOUSES (CAFÉS)

Café Cristallo
Avda. José Félix Rivas
La Castellana
Tel.: 33.1367
Capuccino, pastries, pizzas;
Jazz on weekends

La Danubio
Esquina de Calle San Marino
y Calle Guaicaipuro
San Marino
Chacao
Tel.: 263.7563
Outdoor café; sandwiches,
Arabic food, pastries, ice
cream, fruit drinks and coffee

Manhattan Plaza
Esquina de Calle San Marino
y Calle Guaicaipuro
San Marino
Chacao
Tel.: 32.0067
Outdoor café; hamburgers, sandwiches,
pizza, pastries, ice cream, coffee,
fruit drinks

Maxim
Avda. Mohedano y Avda. Blandín
La Castellana
Tel.: 33.7190
More of a tea room than café;
French pastries, chocolates

Note: There are also a number of sidewalk cafés along Sabana Grande's pleasant boulevard, which offer good capuccino and people watching.

CONTINENTAL

***Aventino**
Avda. San Felipe
Esquina de Calle José Angel Lamas
La Castellana
Tel.: 32.2640, 31.5422
Price range: A

***El Parque**
Edif. Anauco, Sótano 1
Parque Central
Tel.: 573.2976/7013, 575.2591
Price range: B

Jardin des Crepes
Calle Madrid
Entre Calle New York y Trinidad
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.4193
Price range: C

***La Bastille**
Calle Madrid
Entre Calle Caroní y New York
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.3356, 91.5119
Price range: B

***La Belle Epoque**
Edif. Century
Avda. Leonardo da Vinci
Colinas de Bello Monte
Tel.: 752.1342/2202
Price range: A

La Cava
Centro Plaza, Piso 3
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 283.2546/7424
Price range: C

La Cigogne
Calle Garcilaso
Colinas de Bello Monte
Tel.: 751.3313/3242
Price range: B

***La Confiture**
Calle Trinidad
entre Calle Paris y Londres
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.4114
Price range: B

***La Rotisserie**
Hotel Caracas Hilton
Tel.: 571.2332, ext. 4222
Price range: A
Features international food festivals

***Lasserre**
3ra. Avda. entre 2da. y 3ra.
Transversal, Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 283.4558/3079
Price range: A

***Le Coq D'Or**
Calle Los Mangos
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 761.0891/8111
Price range: C

***Le Gourmet**
Hotel Tamanaco Inter-Continental
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 208.7242
Price range: A
Features international food festivals

***Le Petit Bistro de Jacques**
Avda. Principal
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.8108/0975
Price range: B

Primi
Avda. Principal La Castellana
La Castellana
Tel.: 33.3570, 32.2904
Price range: A/B

Visconti
Nivel Sótano Uno
Plaza Museo de Arte Contemporáneo
Parque Central
Tel.: 573.4601/4823
Price range: B

CRIOLLO

***Dama Antañona**
Jesuitas a Maturín No. 14
El Centro
Tel.: 563.5639, 562.8161
Price range: C
Specialty: Hervido de Gallina (Sunday)

***El Porton**
Avda. Pichincha
El Rosal
Tel.: 71.6071/0401, 952.0027
Price range: B
Live, traditional music

Jaime Vivas
Edif. Manaure
Calle San Antonio
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 71.4761/4762
Price range: B

***La Atarraya**
Plaza El Venezolano
San Jacinto
El Centro
Tel.: 541.3575, 545.8235
Price range: B
Recommended for daytime dining only. Near Plaza Bolívar and other sight-seeing attractions.

DINNER AND MUSIC

Il Vitello
Calle Madrid y Calle La Trinidad
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.2320/3606
Price range: B
Jazz, blues

***Juan Sebastian Bar**
Avda. Venezuela
El Rosal
Tel.: 951.5575/0595
Price range: B
International menu;
Live jazz

Lobster Bar
CCCT
Tel.: 959.3756/3780
Price range: B
International menu in day-time;
Light menu at night-time; piano bar

DINNER AND SHOWS

El Picoteo
Avda. Río de Janeiro
Entre Calle Trinidad y Mucuchíes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.1691, 92.2340
Price range: B
Spanish menu; Flamenco dancers and live Spanish music

La Boite del Tamanaco
Hotel Tamanaco Inter-Continental
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 208.7111
Price range: A
Shows; music for dancing

La Cota 880
Hotel Caracas Hilton
Tel.: 571.0486, 574.1122
Price range: A
Shows; music for dancing.

FAST FOOD

Arepas
This native fast food is sold in many street corner *areperas*. Many are open very late at night, and one, El Granjero del Este, Avda. Rio de Janeiro, Las Mercedes (Tel.: 91.6619), is famous for never closing its doors.
Other *areperas* worth a visit are:

Doña Caraotica
Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 751.9445

La Sifrina
Avda. Blandín de La Castellana
La Castellana
Tel.: 33.6569/2615

Las Tres Esquinas
4ta. Avda. de Los Palos Grandes
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 283.1308

Fast-food chains
The following Venezuelan and U.S. chains have a number of locations in the city of Caracas and in other parts of the country:

Arturo's (fried chicken)
Burger King
Domino's Pizza
McDonald's
Pida Pizza
Pizza Hut
Tropi Burger

ICE CREAM PARLORS

Bravissimo
Several locations in the city including
Chuao, CCCT, Nivel C-1;
Las Mercedes, Calle París;
Las Mercedes, Avda. Valle Arriba

Baskin Robbins
Three locations in the city:
Chuao, CCCT; Nivel C-2, La Féria;
La Castellana (1ra. Avda. y 1ra. Transversal)
Las Mercedes (Calle Caroní, entre Calle Madríd y París)

Tutti Frutti
Calle Madrid y Avda. Veracruz
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.8432
Play area upstairs

INDIAN

Delicatesses Indu
Calle Villaflor,
Entre el Boulevard de Sabana Grande y
Avda. Casanova
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 762.0669
Price range: E
Closed Sundays

INTERNATIONAL

La Cabaña
Hotel Tamanaco Inter-Continental
Tel.: 208.7111
Price range: B
Sunday brunch; pizza in the evenings

Le Petit Suisse
Calle Madrid y Calle La Trinidad
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.2357, 92.8746/2669
Price range: B

***Tarzilandia**
10ma. Transversal
Final de Avda. Juan Bosco
Altamira
Tel.: 261.8419/0628
Price range: B

ITALIAN (ALSO SEE PIZZA)

***Da Emore**
Centro Comercial Concresa
Nivel PB
Prados del Este
Tel.: 979.3242
Price range: B

***Da Guido**
Avda. Francisco Solano, No. 8
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 71.0937
Price range: C

Da Sandra
Avda. Francisco Solano
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 762.6546
Price range: C

Da Vittorio
Avda. Principal del Bosque
El Bosque
Tel.: 731.0160/0098
Price range: C

Il Caminetto
Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.1231
Price range: B
Closed Sundays

***Il Padrino**
Edif. Teatro Altamira
Altamira Sur
Tel.: 32.7684, 31.4739
Price range: C

Il Romanaccio
Centro Comercial Paseo Las Mercedes,
Nivel Trasnocho
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.8608/7920
Price range: B

Il Rugantino
Edif. Hotel Tampa
Avda. Francisco Solano
Tel.: 762.0562
Price range: C

***La Campanella**
Edif. 444
Avda. Venezuela
El Rosal
Tel.: 951.4872/3881
Price range: B

La Cavalería Rusticana
Torre Británica
Semisótano
Altamira Sur
Tel.: 32.6875/5921
Price range: B

La Via Emilia
Avda. Orinoco
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.6904, 91.4815
Price range: B

Marco Polo
Torre La Primera
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Campo Alegre
Tel.: 261.3225/4249
Price range: B

Piazza
Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.8848
Price range: A

Ponte Vecchio
Calle Madrid
Entre Calle Veracruz y Caroní
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.9819/7868
Price range: B

Villa D'Este
3ra. Transversal Las Delicias
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 72.9911-9915
Price range: C

JAPANESE

Avila Tei
Quinta El Vallecito
Calle Guaicaipuro
El Rosal
Tel.: 952.0030
Price range: A/B

Brasserie
Hotel Tamanaco
Tel.: 208.7111
Price range: B
Japanese breakfast and lunch

Tambo
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Campo Alegre
Tel.: 33.7216
Price range: B

KOREAN

Seoul
Avda. Francisco Solano
Calle El Cristo, No. 10
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 762.3222
Price range: B

KOSHER

There are no kosher restaurants in Caracas. Kosher meals can be arranged by calling the Yeshiva Gedola of Venezuela (Lubavitch) branch in San Bernadino at 51.4167 or 52.2184. The Baskin Robbins chain also offers some kosher ice creams and frozen desserts. **(For kosher groceries and bakeries, see "Shopping," page 306)**

MEXICAN

El Tizon
Centro Comercial Bello Campo
Sótano C
Bello Campo
Tel.: 31.6715
Price range: C

El Tizoncito
Centro Comercial Paseo Las Mercedes
Sector La Cuadra
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.1020
Price range: C

Takerya Tereyac
Centro Comercial Plaza Las Américas
Sótano
El Cafétal
Tel.: 987.5276, 986.5021
Price range: C
Closed Mondays

PIZZA

La Cabaña
Hotel Tamanaco
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 208.7120
Price range: B

La Strada del Sole
Calle Caroní y Madrid
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.2812/2372
Price range: C

Mazzio's New York Style Pizza
Avda. Principal y
José Felix Rivas
La Castellana
Tel.: 261.2543, 31.0211
Price range: B

Pizzeria Romana
Calle Caroní con Calle Madrid
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.6204
Price range: C

SEAFOOD

Altamar
3ra. Transversal
Entre Avda. Luis Roche
y San Juan Bosco
Altamira
Tel.: 261.9765, 262.1813
Price range: B

Bogavante
Avda. Venezuela
El Rosal
Tel.: 952.0483/0146
Price range: B

Brava Mar
Avda. Principal
La Castellana
Tel.: 33.7793, 31.3780
Price range: B

Dena Ona
Avda. Tamanaco, No. 52
El Rosal
Tel.: 33.7658, 32.0725
Price range: B

El Barquero
Avda. Luis Roche y
5ta. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 261.3621/4645
Price range: B

El Corsario
CCCT
Nivel C-1
Chuao
Tel.: 959.3571, 261.8881
Price range: B

El Jabeguero
Avda. Pichincha
El Rosal
Tel.: 952.0009/0859
Price range: B

El Palacio del Mar
Avda. San Juan Bosco
Entre 3ra. y 5ta. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 261.6460/4412/5436
Price range: B

SPANISH

Casa Juancho
Avda. San Juan Bosco
Entre 2da. y 3ra. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 33.4614/9819, 32.3794
Price range: B

Chocolate
Avda. Tamanaco
El Rosal
Tel.: 951.7575/6130
Price range: B

***Costa Vasca**
Avda. Beethoven
Colinas de Bello Monte
Tel.: 752.4615
Price range: B

El Hostal de la Castellana
Avda. Principal
La Castellana
Tel.: 33.3111/4260
Price range: B

El Lar del Jabugo
Avda. Principal El Bosque
Tel.: 731.0332
Price range: B

El Mesón del Botijo
Avda. Principal y
1ra. Transversal
La Castellana
Tel.: 32.9238/5266
Price range: B

La Castañuela
Avda. Trinidad
Esquina de Calle París
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.6982/6668/9686
Price range: B

Las Cuevas del Guanche
Calle Madrid
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.5813/2250
Price range: B

***Urrutia**
Avda. Francisco Solano López
y Avda. Los Manguitos
Sabana Grande
Tel.: 71.0448
Price range: B

La Candelaria is a Spanish neighborhood in Caracas with many typical restaurants. The atmosphere of most of these restaurants is informal and festive, the regional specialties authentic. These include:

***Bar Basque**
Alcabala a Peligro
La Candelaria
Tel.: 572.4857
Price range: C
Open for lunch only; closed Sunday

El Pozo Canario
Alcabala a Urapal
Callejón Campo Elías
La Candelaria
Tel.: 572.6180/7054
Price range: C

***Guernica**
Peligro a Alcabala
La Candelaria
Tel.: 572.5013
Price range: C

La Casbah
Alcabala a Puente Anauco, No. 214
Local B
La Candelaria
Tel.: 572.6383
Price range: C

***La Tertulia**
Alcabala a Urapal
La Candelaria
Tel.: 572.9757, 574.1476
Price range: C

STEAK HOUSES

Aranjuez
Calle Madrid
Entre Calle Mucuchíes y Monterrey
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 752.1067/4875
Price range: B

Diamante Grill
Avda. Orinoco
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.6020, 91.5634
Price range: B

Don Sancho
Avda. Pichincha
El Rosal
Tel.: 952.0065/1028
Price range: B

El Alamo
Avda. Francisco de Miranda
Boleíta
Tel.: 239.3135/9947
Price range: B

El Campanero
Avda. Principal
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.5120/2697/5164
Price range: B

El Carrizo
Avda. Blandín
La Castellana
Tel.: 32.9370
Price range: C

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

DINNER'S READY - Meat roasts on the spit.

El Gran Charolais
Avda. Principal
La Castellana
Tel.: 33.2723, 32.6776
Price range: B

El Tinajero de los Helechos
Avda. Río de Janeiro
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.6502, 92.0334
Price range: B

Hereford Grill
Calle Madrid
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 92.9664/5127
Price range: B

La Churrasqueria
Avda. Río de Janeiro
Entre Calle Mucuchíes y Monterrey
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 752.6251, 751.8932
Price range: B

***La Estancia**
Avda. Principal
La Castellana
Tel.: 261.2236/1874
Price range: B

La Mansión
Avda. Tamanaco
El Rosal
Tel.: 951.3525/6636
Price range: B

Los Pilones
Avda. Venezuela
Esquina de Calle Pichincha
El Rosal
Tel.: 952.0453/0672
Price range: B

Shorthorn Grill
Avda. Libertador
El Bosque
Tel.: 731.0747/0748
Price range: B

SWISS

***El Chalet**
Avda. Libertador con Avda. Las Acacias
Hotel Crillón
La Florida
Tel.: 761.4411/4415
Price range: B

El Tyrol
Calle Pedroza No. 13
La Florida
Tel.: 74.3646
Price range: B

Guillermo Tell
CCCT
Nivel PB
Tel.: 261.4803/3779
Price range: B

Les Grisons
Hotel Plaza Catedral
Esquina de La Torre
Boulevard Plaza Bolívar
Tel.: 563.7022, 564.2111
Price range: B
Recommended for lunch only.
Near Plaza Bolívar and other sight-seeing attractions.

SUNDAY BRUNCH

L'Attico
Avda. Luis Roche y 2da. Transversal
Altamira
Tel.: 261.2819/4739
Price range: B/C

La Terraza
Hotel Caracas Hilton
Restaurant"La Terraza"
Tel.: 503.5000
Price range: B

La Terraza Cacique
Hotel Tamanaco Inter-Continental
Brunch featuring *criollo* and international foods along with Venezuelan traditional music. Sundays and holidays 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Price range: B

Verdelecho
Hotel Eurobuilding
Brunch featuring *criollo* and international cuisine along with Venezuelan traditional music. Sundays 11:30 a.m - 5:00 p.m.
Price range: B

THAI

Samui
Avda. Andrés Bello con 1ra. Transversal
Los Palos Grandes
Tel.: 285.4600, 283.4146
Reservations only. Closed Sunday.
Price range: B

VEGETARIAN

Al Gusto
Edif. Tajamar, Sótano 1
Parque Central
Tel.: 576.1712
Monday to Friday, lunch only
Price range: E

El Buffet Vegetariano
Avda. Los Jardines
La Florida
Tel.: 74.7490
Monday to Friday, lunch only
Price range: E

El Canalito
Edif. DakDoul
Avda. Principal de Los Ruices
Los Ruices
Tel.: 36.4702
Price range: E
Monday to Saturday, lunch only

MONACA

MOLINOS NACIONALES C.A.
EXCELENCIA EN ALIMENTOS

Desde hace más de 35 años producimos en Molinos Nacionales, C.A. (MONACA), alimentos de la dieta diaria líderes en el mercado venezolano. La División de Consumo Masivo de MONACA cuenta con una infraestructura consolidada, integrada por una excelente y poderosa organización de producción, mercadeo y ventas, muy bien dirigida por profesionales de amplia trayectoria. El resultado: La elaboración y desarrollo de los alimentos más apreciados en la mesa venezolana... calidad ante todo.

Juana Harina de Maíz
Robin Hood Harina de Trigo
arroz selecto mónica
cachapas misia Juana
ADOBO completo La Comadre
Arroz Molva
Gold Bell Aceite de Maíz Comestible
mónica crema de arroz
avena Lassie
Harina de Maíz Pajarito

DISTRIBUIDORA JUANA C.A., OTRA EMPRESA DEL GRUPO MONACA CALIDAD ANTE TODO

Calle Los Laboratorios, Torre Beta Mezzanina, Oficina M-05 Los Ruices
Caracas. Teléfonos: 239.12.29 - 238.33.90 - 239.08.02. Fax: 239.60.58

NIGHTCLUBS AND BARS

Like any cosmpolitan cities, Caracas is a place of constant change, with the newest "in" places popping up all over town, and former favorites suddenly becoming passé.

For most dancing places and nightclubs, there is no cover during the week, no minimum charge, and drinks can be purchased by the glass; on weekends, there is usually a cover charge or *consumo minimo*, which means groups and couples are required to buy a bottle of rum or whiskey with mixers.

Many of the nicer clubs will not permit men in without jackets or if they are wearing jeans.

Though most places open in the late afternoon, most people don't head out before 10:00 p.m. - even on weeknights. However, the later the hour, the more likely that a long line has already formed outside the most popular spots.

Acuarela Do Brasil
Centro Comercial Bello Campo
Nivel Sótano
Avda. Principal Bello Campo
Bello Campo
Tel.: 261-6171
Brazilian music

Dallas Texas Cafe
Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.79.49
Tex-Mex atmosphere, occasional country music.

El Maní Es Así
Avda. Francisco Solano
Sabana Grande
Tel.: -
A Bs.250 ($2.74) cover charge includes the first drink. Live salsa, merengue

El Muro de Berlin
3ra. Transversal de Altamira
Entre Luis Roache y San Juan Bosco
Altamira
Tel.: 261.4901
Salsa, avant garde music

El Picoteo
Avda. Rio de Janeiro
Entre Calles Trinidad y Mucuchíes
Las Mercedes
Telf.: 91.1691
Humorists, flamenco music

El Tabuco
Avda. Principal Las Mercedes
Tel.: 751.9445, 752.4724
Live music for dancing. No cover or minimum.

Hawaii Kai
Edif. Pigalle
Colinas de Bello Monte
Tel.: 752.1268
Shows

Hollywood
Calle Mercedes
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.3257
Mix of American and European music on weekends, with salsa and merengue during the week.

Illusion
Avda. Principal con Calle Londres
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 91.7132, 978.6358

Juan Sebastián Bar
Avda. Venezuela at Calle Mohedano
El Rosal
Tel.: 951.0595
Live jazz

L'Attico
Avda. Luis Roche y 2da. Transversal
Altamira
American-style bar and restaurant
Tel.: 261.2819/4739

La Bodeguita del Medio
Avda. Los Manolos y Avda. Andres Bello
Tel.: 752.0556
Cuban music and food

La Cupula del Este
Edif. Inpres
Avda. Tamanaco
El Rosal
Tel.: 951.1786
Live *criollo* music

La Mirage
Avda. Principal de Las Mercedes
Entre Calles Monterrey y Mucuchíes
Tel.: 752.24354, 751.8909

Le Club
CCCT Sótano
Chacaíto
Tel.: 952.0807
Members only

Lobster Bar
CCCT, Nivel Terrazo
Chuao
Tel.: 959.3780/3756
Occasional live music

Magic
Calle Madríd
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 928.704
Live music; jacket and tie required.

Palladium
Parking lot level
East end of CCCT
Chuao
Tel.: 959.2891

Pida Pizza (Three locations)
Young crowds, no cover charge or minimum. Live and recorded music. Three locations:
Calle California
Las Mercedes
Tel.: 926.062

Avda. San Juan Bosco
Entre 3ra. y 5ta. Transversals
Altamira
Tel.: 261.3092

Edif. Don Elias
Boulevard de Sabana Grande
Tel.: 762.9052

Pigmalión
Avda. Blandín
La Castellana
Tel.: 32.3613
Open until 5:00 a.m. daily except Monday. Thursday is dance party night with vintage rock.

Pub n Grill
Calle La Trinidad
Las Mercedes
Live music
Tel.: 999.895

Salón Canton
Calle Londres a Calle La Trinidad
Las Mercedes
Karaoke bar
Tel.: 915.213, 921.375

Sarao
Centro Comercial Bello Campo
Avda. Principal Bello Campo
Bello Campo
Strong tropical ambiance at this club, where live bands play predominantly Latin music. Jacket and tie required.
Tel.: 31.2531

The Flower
Plaza Tower
La Castellana
Couples only
Tel.: 33.3013

The Underground
Estacionamiento nivel sótano
Las Mercedes
Upscale crowd; live music twice a week.
Tel.: -

Weekends
San Juan Bosco
Con 2da. Transversal
Altamira
American-style club
Tel. 262.8339

Xanadu
Avda. Blandín
La Castellana
Tel.: -
Open until 4:00 a.m. daily, except Sunday.
Cover is Bs.600($6.59) for name bands.

Photo: Mario Corvetto ©

HOT SPOT - One of the many popular nightclubs, Weekends, which is often crowded.

OUT AND ABOUT IN MARACAIBO

"Black gold" or oil dominates Venezuela's second-largest city, the hot and humid Maracaibo, which is also the capital of Zulia. The city is situated on the edge of Lake Maracaibo, the largest lake in South America, which is spanned by the world's longest pre-stressed concrete bridge.

Since 1925, Maracaibo has been the base for Venezuela's petroleum industry because of being situated on the country's largest-known petroleum reserves. This wealth spurred the city's rapid sprawl and it is dotted with modern luxury apartments and houses and gleaming business towers.

The city is a bustling, modern home to 1.2 million people, and the twangy accents of cowboy boot-shod Texans are a common sound in many city restaurants and nightspots.

Yet, despite the dramatic changes over the last five years, Maracaibo has maintained its unique historical identity. A handful of colonial houses not demolished in the rush for modernization can be seen in El Empedrado between Avdas. El Milagro and Bella Vista or Santa Cecilia. The Dutch influence is illustrated by the vibrant, contrasting colors of the house facades.

Maracaibo boasts a wide range of cultural offerings ranging from those sponsored by the state and city governments' cultural departments to those organized by private groups. Two of the most active forces behind these activities are the state's culture department, Instituto Zuliano de la Cultura, and the Centro de Bellas Artes.

Most of Maracaibo's main streets have a number as well as a name, which can be very confusing to visitors. There is no consistency in printed material or in verbal directions; streets can be referred to either by their name or their number or by a combination of the two.

The main streets include:
Avda. 2 - El Milagro
Avda. 3Y - San Martín
Avda. 4 - Bella Vista
Avda. 8 - 18 de Octubre
Avda. 15 - Las Delicias
Avda. 17 - Rafael María Baralt (or just Baralt)
Avda. 28 - La Limpia
Avda. 100 - Sabaneta (later changes to Libertador east of Avda. 17)
Calle 61 - Universidad
Calle 77 - 5 de Julio
Calle 85 - Falcón
Calle 93 - Padilla

In the zone that is also the heart of the restaurant and shopping area along Calle 77 (5 de Julio) to Avda. 4 (Bella Vista), some of the north/south street numbers are slightly out of order.

THE ARTS

CINEMA

Films reach Maracaibo from Caracas surprisingly quickly after their original release, and are mostly shown in their original language with Spanish subtitles. Local newspapers list the theater's telephone number, times and the censor's rating.

The area code for Maracaibo is (061)

Altamira
Avda. 18
Media cuadra norte de Calle 77
Tel.: -

5 de Julio
Calle 72
Entre Avdas. 20 y 21
El Paraiso
Tel.: 52.7836

Metro
Avda. 4
Bella Vista a Calle 90
Santa Lucia
Tel.: 22.9368

Paragua
Centro Comercial Paragua
Prolongación Avda. 2
La Paragua
Tel.: 41.1081

Roxy
Avda. 3Y
Entre Calles 80 y 81
Bella Vista
Tel.: 91.7352

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

HANGING HANDICRAFTS - The Guajiro market in Maracaibo houses souvenirs for sale.

THEATER

Teatro de la Ciudad is on Calle 93 (Padilla) No. 11-54 (Tel.: 21.2372) with many outdoor performances held in Plaza Baralt from September through December. Sociedad Dramática, Calle 77 (5 de Julio) between Avda. 3C and 3D (Tel.: 91.8228), offers permanent theater workshops along with performances.

Escuela de Teatro Inés Laredo (Tel.: 21.1510) has various resident companies that give performances throughout the year.

Two of the main theaters are:

Teatro de Bellas Artes
Centro de Bellas Artes
Avda. 3-F y Calle 68A
Tel.: 91.2950/2239/2860.
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (Saturday)

Teatro Los Ninos Cantores/Teatrino Ninos Cantores
Segunda Etapa
Calle 96 entre Avda. 55 y 55B
La Paz
Tel.: 88.403/606

This is part of a large complex including the school, Escuela de Danza Teatro Los Niños Cantores, which has its own dance troupe NC Danza, and Escuela de Teatro Los Niños Cantores. The theater also manages the Museo Biblio, next to Iglesia San Tarcicio, Altura de San Miguel, Circunvalación 2 and is open 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. daily.

OPERA AND DANCE

The Grupo Lírico of the Escuela de Opera, affiliated with the state's culture office, Instituto Zuliano de la Cultura, (Tel.: 21.2964) offers light opera by Venezuelan authors as well as classics, with its season usually running from October to December.

Danzas Contemporáneo de Maracaibo (Tel.: 91.2860/2950) is based in the Centro de Bellas Artes. The Compañia de Ballet de Cámara del Zulia and Ballet de Cámara Juvenil, composed of graduates of the Escuela de Ballet Gracyna Yeropunov, give frequent performances (Tel.: 91.2950). Danzas Maracaibo, featuring folkloric dances, is headquartered in Torre de Prensa. Danza LUZ, the dance troupe of the Universidad de Zulia, does not have a set season (Tel.: 52.0626, 51.0078). Grupo Tablán is an independent theater group that usually performs in Centro de Bellas Artes.

The Escuela de Ballet de Zulia includes the Conservatorio de Música José Luis Paz, with more than 1,000 students in its kindergarten section and another 700 students at higher levels.

CONCERTS

The 50-year-old-plus Sinfónica de Maracaibo offers concerts but has no fixed performance place, although the Maracaibo Bancomara on El Milagro offers concerts at 7:00 p.m. each Tuesday. The Orquesta Sinfónica de Zulia (Tel.: 22.3573), the Orquesta de Vientos - woodwind professionals who have graduated from the school of music - and the Joven Solistas de Zulia also perform regularly.

The Banda de Conciertos Simón Bolívar, which offers concerts in the Plaza de la República at Calle 77 between Avda. 3H and 3Y every Thursday at 7:00 p.m., also occasionally offers concerts at 6:00 p.m. Sunday at Plaza Bolívar.

Escuela Superior de Arte Neptalí Rincón, which offers various classes in creative arts, co-sponsors an annual choral meeting with some 40 groups during the month of December. This is usually held in the auditorium of the Museo Municipal de Artes Gráficas from 6:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

ART MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Alianza Francesa de Maracaibo
Avda. 3-F
Tel.: 91.2921
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - noon, 2:30 - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

In addition to French lessons, the organization offers changing expositions, ranging from painting to photography.

Banmara
Banco Maracaibo
Plaza Bolívar
Tel.: 92.3042/4292, 91.7055
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

The bank has a gallery that offers rotating expositions of Venezuelan artists, with an emphasis on Zulia's artists, and an auditorium where regular cultural events are presented, such as "Tuesday Culturals," free events at 7:30 p.m. every Tuesday.

Centro de Bellas Artes
Avda. 3-F y Calle 68A
Tel.: 91.2950/2239/2860.
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (Saturday)

Founded in 1954, this fine arts center has both theater and art gallery areas for art exhibits and live stage presentations, which range from drama to concerts. Classic, art and foreign films are shown at 8:30 p.m. every Monday.

Adjacent to the center is the Galería Mali Mali, which features Guajiro handcrafts and a number of antiques. There is also an informal restaurant and soda fountain between the two areas, which is open daily from 7:30 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.

Centro Venezolano Americano (CEVAZ)
Calle 63 entre Avda. 3-E y 3-F
Tel.: 91.1436/1980/1880
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
8:00 a.m.- 11:00 a.m. (Saturday)

The center has changing art exhibits, as well as a library and language classes.

Galería Aldebarín
Hotel del Lago Inter-Continental
Avda. 2 (El Milagro) a Calle 67
Tel.: 99.24518, 92.2022/4010
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 3:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Saturday)

Galeria Art Nouveau
Edif. San Francisco de Paola
Calle 73 en Esquina Avda. 3H
Tel.: 92.2998
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Saturday)
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Sunday)

Instituto Zuliano de la Cultura
Avda. El Milagro a Calle 95
Tel.: 22.3916, 21.2964
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Sunday)

This institute is the headquarters for the state's cultural affairs. The large building houses three art galleries (Sala Julio Arraga, Manuel Puchi Fonseca and Malí Fuenmayor) and a public library and offers numerous workshops on the arts.

Kalaga Art Gallery
Aventura Mall, Local 58
Calle 75 y Avda. 12
Tel.: 61.4507/0485
Hours: 9:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m, 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Saturday)

Libreria La Merced
Avda. 4 Bella Vista con Calle 62, La Universidad
Tel.: 74.583
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Saturday)
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Sunday)

Millenium
Avda. 3F a Calle 77 (5 de Julio), No. 76-80
Tel: 92.2841
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Saturday)

Pinacoteca
Seguros Carabobo
Edif. Seguros Carabobo
Calle Rondón
Tel.: 88.601/605
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

An extensive private collection is on display along with occasional other exhibits.

MUSEUMS AND HISTORICAL SITES

Maracaibo's cathedral, facing Plaza Bolívar, was built in the last century. Inside is a crucifix, called Cristo Negro, or Black Christ, which legend says survived a fire started by local Indians in 1600 that destroyed the original church.

Another religious treasure is the Basílica of Our Lady Of Chiquinquirá. The church, built sometime before 1744, is lavishly embellished, with a painted facade. The focus inside is the tiny painted image of the Virgen del Rosario de la Chiquinquirá, popularly referred to as La Chinita. Legend has it that this image appeared to a young girl on a board of wood she found in the lake. La Chinita is venerated throughout the state and pilgrims come from all over to celebrate her feast day on Nov. 18.

The Government Palace, better known as the Palacio de las Aguilas for the large sculpted eagles perched on the roof, is on Calle 95, northwest of the cathedral. Next door, La Casa de Morales marks the spot where the Spanish Armada signed its capitulation after losing the famous naval Battle of Lake Maracaibo in 1823. This is the only residence left from the colonial era in Maracaibo.

Across the bridge on the eastern side of Lake Maracaibo are the famous oil derricks, which can be seen best from Cabimas. Technically, it is illegal to take pictures of the derricks due to fear of sabatoge.

Another interesting side trip from Maracaibo is to Sinamaica Lagoon, where communities of Paraujano Indians live in houses built on stilts in the water, known as *palafitos*. This is the area that reminded Amerigo Vespucci of Venice, hence the origin of the country's name. Excursions on the lagoon can be taken from Puerto Cuervito.

The fort on San Carlos Island is considered to be one of the most important in Venezuela from the colonial period. It and two others were built near the entrance to Lake Maracaibo to ward off pirates from Europe. The fort can be reached via shuttle boat that departs regularly from the dock in El Moján.

Anthropological Museum
Avda. Bella Vista
No. 91-37
Tel.: 22.0525
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

Exhibits range from relics of early inhabitants of the Lake Maracaibo area to displays from other countries. The museum also sponsors periodic dance and music presentations at various sites in Maracaibo.

Casa de la Capitulación (Casa de Morales)
En frente de Plaza Bolívar
95 en Avda. 4
Tel.: 22.7998
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
No fixed hours (Saturday mornings)

Built in the late 18th or early 19th century, this museum is the only colonial-era home left in Maracaibo. On Oct. 3, 1823, when the house was occupied by Gen. Francisco Tomás Morales, the Treaty of Capitulation was signed by the Spanish after their defeat at the Battle of Lake Maracaibo. The house has been handsomely restored and is furnished with period pieces.

Museo Rafael Urdaneta
Avda. 7-A
Tel.: 21.3923, 22.6778
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Friday)
8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday)

This museum, two blocks north of Urdaneta Park, was constructed in 1936 on the same site where Rafael Urdaneta, one of the heroes of the War for Independence, was born. It contains hundreds of relics pertaining to Urdaneta, and several rich collections of paintings, arms and foreign money. It also has a library with much information on both Urdaneta and Maracaibo.

The Municipal Museum of Graphics Arts
Concejo Municipal, PB
Plaza Bolívar
Tel.: 22.3923/6778
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Saturday)

This museum's focus is on a permanent exhibit of reproductions of old photos and newspapers. It also offers contemporary photography shows.

PARKS AND GARDENS

Parque de Peonías
12 km (7.2 miles) norte de Maracaibo
En la Carretera de El Moján (San Rafael)
Tel.: 79.328
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Friday)
8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday)

Home of the Complejo Científico Cultural y Recreacional Simón Bolívar, Peonías Park has expansive grounds with an artificial lake and large playground. The park's star attraction is the expo center, which houses a planetarium; astronomy and biology museums, and an anthropological display with artifacts from local digs. There is a small admission charge.

Paseo Ciencias/Plaza Bolívar
Entre Avda. 4 y 12
Calles 95 y 96

The traditional center for the city since its foundation, the plaza is filled with mature trees, ornamental plantings, benches and a statue of Simón Bolívar.

Paseo Ciencias was created in 1973 amidst a storm of controversy, when seven blocks of traditional Maracaibo-style houses were razed for its creation. Only the Iglesia de Santa Barbara was left standing. The *paseo* now serves as an oasis for sun-baked shoppers who savor its shady trees, bench-lined paths, and numerous sculptures by well-known Venezuelan artists including Jesús Soto, Lia Bermúdez and Víctor Valera.

Paseo del Lago
Entre Avda. 2 (El Milagro)
y Lake Maracaibo

This 66-hectare (165 acres) park, with entrances near Calle 86 and 84A, offers ample green

spaces, parking, baseball diamonds, multi-use sports fields, a marina, tennis courts, restrooms, a snack bar and kiosks.

Parque Sur Zoológico
Con La Cañada

The 87-hectare (217.5 acres) zoo, closed at the time of publication, is being renovated under the auspices of Cervecería Polar.

Plaza del Buen Maestro
Avda. 2 (El Milagro)

These tree-shaded, grassy grounds are criss-crossed by paths and house a soda fountain, a basketball court and an observation tower, called El Mirador, with a free elevator taking visitors to the top for a view of the city and Lake Maracaibo. It is open until 9:00 p.m. on weekends. The park is also home to the Monumento de la Marina and a small amusement area is located next door.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

PINATA PLAYTIME - Filled with candies and toys, piñatas are a must for every child's birthday party.

SHOPPING

The principal areas for the better shops are concentrated along Avda. 4 (Bella Vista) between Calle 61 (Avda. Universidad) and Calle 77 (5 de Julio), and for about six blocks west of Bella Vista along 5 de Julio; as well as along Avda. 28 La Limpia.

Centro Comercial Costa Verde, three blocks south of Avda. Universidad, is considered to be the city's best by most people, with two of its locales particularly noteworthy. The first is Tienda 700 Galería de Arte, with a bit of everything from antiques to modern art, and frequent exhibits of special collections and other art works. The section in the back, called Calle Vieja, is like a miniature version of old Maracaibo, with brick streets and shops found behind old Maracaibo-style facades, complete with dragon's head rainspouts, painted in vivid contrasting colors.

Other large shopping centers are found throughout the city, including a grouping on both sides of Avda. 15 (Las Delicias) just south of Avda. Circunvalación 2 intersection; Centro Comercial La Paragua, just east of Las

Delicias on Circunvalación 2; and Centro Comercial Salto Angel, behind Plaza de la Republica on Avda. 3Y.

Various formal shops around town are well-known for *artesanía* or handicrafts, including Calicantro at Calle 2A, No.71-134, corner of Calle 72; which is open Monday to Saturday from 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and from 2:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. (Tel.: 91.5563); Mali Mali Taller de Arte Guajiro, in the complex of the Centro de Bellas Artes at Avda. 3F, Bi. 67-217 (Tel.: 91.2950); La Casita de Bahareque, at Avda. 3C, No.66-120, Sector La Virginia across from the Veterans' Hospital, (Tel.: 91.1276) which is open from 8:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. from Monday to Saturday, and specializes in miniature versions of typical Maracaibo-style houses; and Turismo Tropico, at Avda. 2 El Milagro at Calle 93 Padilla (Tel.: 22.3010).

Traditional flea markets, largely staffed by Guajiro sellers and thus usually referred to as Guajiro Markets, are all open daily during daylight hours. Here, bargaining is done over traditional Guajiro handicrafts like wall hangings or *tapices*, and hammocks or *chinchorros*. The principal sites are located on Avda. Milagro at Calle 95, which is mostly *artesanía*; and at Calle 100 (Avda. Libertador) at Avda. 17 (Los Haticos), which is the largest of all. This market overflows into the adjacent streets, both to the north and south of Calle 100, east of Avda. 17, and at the north end of Avda. 2 (El Milagro).

SPORTS AND RECREATION

As in Caracas, there are a number of private country clubs and gyms in Maracaibo. See the chart on the following page for country club information.

GYMS

Action Club
Hotel del Lago Inter-Continental
Avda. 2 a Calle 61
Tel.: 92.4222/4022
Hours: Pool open 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. (Daily)
Gym open 6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. (Daily)
Facilities: Aerobics, swimming, karate, raquetball, volleyball, jazz dance, ballet, rhythmic and Olympic gym, multi-force machines, medical and dietetic consultation, facial treatments, massage, sauna and steambath.
Fees: Individual inscription of Bs.20,000 ($224.16) with a monthly fee of Bs.3,000 ($32.96). There are reduced family and corporate rates.

Physical Spa
Avda. 22-A
N-66-89
Indiomara
Tel.: 52.8604
Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. (Monday to Sunday)
Facilities: Aerobics, multi-force machines, weights and sauna.
Fees: Individual inscription of Bs.1,000 ($10.98) a month, and Bs.1,200 ($13.18) monthly.

MARACAIBO COUNTRY CLUBS

	Lago Maracaibo Country Club	Club Nautico de Maracaibo	Club Bella Vista	Alianza
Membership cost	Bs.200,000	Bs.2,300,000	Bs.1,300,000	Bs.40,000
Swimming pool	✧	✧	✧	✧
Playing field		✧		✧
Jogging/tennis	✧	✧	✧	
Gym		✧	✧	✧
Massage				
Sauna/steam bath		✧		
Horse riding				
Golf	✧			
Jacuzzi				
Playground		✧		✧
Card rooms	✧	✧	✧	✧
Conference rooms	✧	✧	✧	✧
Restaurant	✧	✧	✧	✧
Chapel				
Marina		✧		
Telephone	91.1223	92.4578	91.8496	91.9513
Area	Via Concepción	El Milagro	Calle 72-3H	El Milagro

SPORTING EVENTS

BASEBALL

Zulia's Aguilas play in the Liga Especial during the U.S. winter season, which accounts for the big-name pro and AAA players from stateside teams who join local rosters to maintain or sharpen skills. Games are played in the Complejo Polideportivo stadium, just south of the Universidad de Zulia, between Calle 77 (5 de Julio) and Avda. 28 (La Limpia) and east of Circunvalación 2. For ticket and schedule information, contact Luis Rincón at 92.9335/0337.

BASKETBALL

The Gaiteros play during the "off" season of stateside pro teams, or during the summer months - with the rosters including various big name U.S. players or those aspiring to pro status. The covered stadium of the Complejo Polideportivo is south of Universidad de Zulia, between Calle 77 (5 de Julio) and Avda. 28 (La Limpia) and east of Avda. Circunvalación. For information about tickets and schedules, call the Gaiteros' office at 91.3089.

BULLFIGHTS

Tickets and schedules for upcoming bullfights at the city's bullring, which is at the intersection of Avda. 16 and Avda. Circunvalación 2, can be obtained from a permanent office at Hotel del Lago, Local 9 at 91.8371, 92.4222/4022.

HORSE RACING

The new horse-racing track complex is found just east of the Rafael Urdaneta Bridge, along the freeway that enters Maracaibo from the east. Races begin at 5:30 p.m. and are held every Wednesday. There is no admission charge. Those attending, especially those wishing to sit in the more exclusive section, tend to dress up, with men wearing jackets and ties.

ROLLER SKATING

The Rollertec roller skating rink is located on Calle 64 between Avda. 4 and Avda. 8. The rink is open weekends from 5:00 p.m. (Tel.: 92.2156).

DINING OUT

Maracaibo has a lively nightlife, with many good restaurants and a number of clubs and bars featuring live entertainment. The Hotel del Lago Inter-Continental and the Maruma Hotel frequently feature big-name entertainers or well-known bands. These two, along with the Hotels Kristoff and Presidente, also have bars that are frequented as much by locals as hotel guests.

There is a considerable amount of overlap in several of the hotels, restaurants, nightspots, dance clubs and even art galleries - with many traditional and new places doing double or triple duty in fulfilling their clientele's entertainment needs.

Among those sites offering a wide range of selections are Centro Comercial Villasmil, Avda. 12 between Calles 74 and 75, which is a tiny shopping complex of shops, and includes the eateries Galería Musas and the Malanga Cafe.

The following is a sampling of the city's eateries, with the average per-person price for a a three-course meal (appetizer, main dish and dessert):

PRICE KEY

A= $35 or more (Bs.3,185)	D= $15 - $10 (Bs.1,365-Bs.910)
B= $35 - $25 (Bs.3,185-Bs.2,275)	E= $10 or less (Bs.910)
C= $25 - $15 (Bs.2,275-Bs.1,365)	

Casablanca
Calle 67 con Avda. 3G
Tel.: 91.9571/9530
Price range: C
International cuisine

Casavieja
Calle 72 y Avda. 3-F
Tel.: 91.9961
Price range: E
Brazilian-style, "all you want" spit-roasted meats

Chalet Suizo
Calle 78 con Avda. 3-G
Tel.: 91.8612
Price range: B
Swiss cuisine with many types of fondues

Charlie
Avda. 8 entre Calles 69 y 70
Santa Rita
Tel.: 75.241, 70.189
Price range: C/D
American-style food

Chop's
Avda. 10 a Calle 66S
Tel.: 75.870
Price range: E
Fast-food emporium known for its traditional Maracaibo *patecones*

Chop's
Calle 72 entre Avda. 9 y 9B
Tel.: 78.724, 70.118
Fast-food emporium known for its traditional Maracaibo *patecones*
Price range: E

Churrasquería Argentina
Calle 72 a Avda. 12
Tel.: 80.748
Price range: D
Argentine-style grill

Dallas Texas Cafe
Calle 72 en Avda. 5 de Julio
Tel.: 84.236
Price range: D/E
Tex-Mex

Delfín
Calle 75 at 3-H
Tel.: 91.3349
Price range: C
Seafood

Deli Piazza
Centro de Bellas Artes
Avda. 3F at Calle 70
Tel.: -
Price range: E
Fondue and shish kebabs

El Gaucho
Avda. 3-Y entre Calles 77 y 78
Tel.: 82.110
Price range: E
Argentine-style mixed grill

El Tinajero
Avda. 3C entre Calle 67 y Universidad
Tel.: 91.9020
Price range: E
Criollo

El Zaguán
Centro Rafael Urdaneta
Calle La Tradición (formerly Calle Carabobo)
No.6-15, entre Avda. 6 y 7
Tel.: 61.4954
Price range: D/E
Traditional Criollo and Zuliano specialties

Fein Kaffe
Calle 78 con Avda. 3F
Tel.: 91.4246/4250
Price range: C
American-style

Girasol
Hotel El Paseo
Tel.: 91.9444
Price range: C
International cuisine
Country's only revolving restaurant

La Carreta del Ché
Avda. 13A entre Calle 76 y 77
Tel.: 83.203
Price range: D
Continental

La Muralla China
Avda. 3Y entre Calle 74 y 75
Tel.: 92.1540
Price range: E
Chinese

Lago del Oeste China
Calle 76 a Avda. 3-H
Tel.: 78.366
Price range: E
Chinese

Mandarin
Avda. 3H con Calle 68
Tel.: 91.2120/0060
Price range: D
Chinese

Mi Vaquita
Calle 76 con 3-H
Tel: 91.1990
Price range: E
American-style steaks

Pizzeria Napolitana
Calle 77 entre 3 y 4
Tel.: 76.214
Price range: E
Italian

Pizzeria 72
Calle 72 entre Avda. 13 y 14
Tel.: 71.485
Price range: E
Italian

Restaurant San José
Hotel San José
Avda. 3Y con Calle 82
Tel.: 91.4647/4714
Price range: D
European-style café

Sal y Pimienta
Calle 72 entre Avda. 3F y 3G
Tel.: 91.1476
Price range: E
Mexican (Wednesday)
Brunch (Sunday, Saturday)

Samuri
Avda. 20, No. 68-21
Tel.: 51.8806
Price range: C/D
Japanese

Taberna Vasca
Avda. 3Y entre 73 y 74
Tel.: 72.394, 80.246
Price range: C
Basque

Toledo
Calle 76 con Avda. 3-H
Tel.: 74.665
Price range: C
Paella specialty

Windows
Hotel del Lago
Tel.: 92.4518/4022
Price range: B
Gourmet-style

NIGHTCLUBS AND BARS

Prices vary considerably in local bars, often depending on the service and atmosphere. Many clubs are for members and their guests only; others are open to the public, but charge a cover fee. A few of the most popular nighspots include:

Barra La Fragata
Calle 70 entre Avda. 8 y 9
Tel.: 70.223, 79.724

Casa Paco
Avda. 4 (Bella Vista), No. 70-49
Tel.: 77.040

Club D'Class
Centro Comercial Venvensa
Calle 64 entre Avda. 4 y 8
Tel.: 92.2156

Copas
Calle 76 a Avda. 13
Tel.: 91.9301

El Solar de Pancho
Avda. 4 (Bella Vista) cerca de Calle 72
Tel. 79.276

Hotel del Lago Inter-Continental
Avda. 2 (El Milagro) a Calle 61
Tel.: 92.4518/2022/4010

L'Incontro Caffe
Hotel San José
Avda. 3Y (San Martín)
a Calle 82, No. 82-29
Tel.: 91.4647/91.4714

La Boite
Hotel Kristoff
Avda. 8 a Calle 68
Tel.: 76.111-113

La Cabaña Café
Centro Comercial Las Delicias Norte
Piso 2
Tel.: 42.1676

Players
Avda. 8 entre Calle 72 y 73
Santa Rita
Tel.: 71.034

Plaza Club
Centro Comercial Salto Angel
Avda. 3Y entre Calle 78 y 79
San Martín
Tel.: 92.2538

Sonata
Avda. 4 (Bella Vista) a Calle 75
Tel.: 70.897, 77.229

Splash Club
Calle 72 at Avda. 16, No.16-78
Tel. 52.1131

Ykaru
Centro Comercial Costa Verde, PB
Avda. 4
Bella Vista
Tel.: 92.0271/0275

OUT AND ABOUT IN VALENCIA

Two hours west of Caracas by freeway, the capital of Carabobo state is also the center for Venezuela's manufacturing industry, with over 800 small, medium and large companies producing everything from cars to toiletries.

Soon after it was founded in 1555, the city was nearly destroyed by the mad conquistador, Lope de Aguirre in his search for the fabled treasure, El Dorado. It later survived attacks from Indians, French pirates and a serious earthquake in 1812.

Despite its reputation as an industrial city, Valencia, with a population of just under 1 million, has a very active cultural scene. The best source of information for upcoming events is the cultural events page of Friday's El Carabobeño newspaper.

An interesting side trip from Valencia is to Campo Carabobo, about 20 minutes southwest of town via the highway toward Barquisimeto. This is a large park whose focal points are a monument, marking the decisive Battle of Carabobo. Fought on June 24, 1821, this battle virtually ended the War of Independence. An honor guard, dressed in colonial-era uniforms, performs an impressive changing of the guard ceremony every hour. Shorts are not permitted within the fenced area of the monuments.

A side-road north from the parking road encircling the monuments leads to El Mirador, a building shaped like a huge inverted pyramid, which overlooks the site of the famous battle. An audovisual presentation is available.

Near Valencia are Las Trincheras Hot Springs. These thermal springs are said to be the second hottest in the world, after those in Unjumo, Japan. Mineral-laden waters, averaging 92º C (197.6º F) and accompanied by dense steam, are channeled from their source in the mountains into a series of three pools, which progress through hot, hotter and hottest. Along with the thermal pools, the resort offers naturally heated mud baths (42º C or 108º F), saunas, steam rooms, professional massages, dressing rooms, a gym and 24-hour nursing services.

Located 15 minutes north of Valencia via the freeway toward Puerto Cabello, the site was developed as a tourist spa early in the century. The original building of the facility still stands, but is now accompanied by a separate group of modern units offering 80 rooms and a dining hall.

Day visitors pay a fee of Bs.150 ($1.64) for adults and Bs.30 for children to use the thermal pools, mud baths, steam room and sauna. Overnight visitors can stay in the simple but adequate rooms for Bs.1,100 ($12.08) single, Bs.1,500 ($16.48) double, Bs.1,800 ($19.78) triple, Bs.2,000 ($21.97) mini-suite or two types of larger suites, ranging from Bs.3,000 to Bs.3,500 ($32.97 to $38.46).

For visitors from Caracas, a private shuttle bus leaves the capital at 7:00 a.m. and returns at 4:00 p.m. daily. (Tel.: 041.66.9795 in Valencia or 02.661.3626/3724/4936/2703 in Caracas).

THE ARTS

CINEMA

(The area code for Valencia is 041.)

Cine Arte Patio Trigal
C.C. Patio Trigal
Trigal Norte
Tel.: 42.5400
Classic films

Cine Camoruco
C.C. Camoruco
Avda. Bolívar
Tel.: -

Guaparo
Avda. Bolívar
Tel.: 21.3454

HS1 y HS2
C.C. Hotel Stauffer
Avda. Bolívar
Tel.: 22.4101

La Viña 1 y 2
C.C. La Viña
Tel.: 22.0055
Art films on Tuesdays

THEATER, BALLET AND OPERA

The principal theater in Valencia, the Teatro Municipal, stages concerts, ballets and plays. It is on Calle Colombia, Avda. Carabobo, El Centro (Tel.: 57.4306).

There are no actual ballet or opera companies in Valencia, but a children's ballet performs occasionally, though there is no fixed performance site.

Other theater and public performances are held at these sites:

Ateneo de Valencia
Avda. Bolívar a Calle Salóm
Tel.: 57.6573, 84.014,
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday)

Sala Alterna
Avda. Briceño Méndez a Calle Colombia
Tel.: 82.976
Hours: Scheduled performances only

Teatro Arlequin
Avda. Anzoátegui a Calle Vargas
Tel.: 82.976
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. (Monday to Sunday)

This theater is home to a dozen groups, including the Centro Regional de Teatro, Centro Nacional de Teatro del Niño, Centro de Dramaturgos Nacional, Asociación Venezolana de Directores de Teatro, Asociación Nacional de Drama Jovenarte, and the Carabobo chapter of the Asociación Nacional de Actores.

The Forum
Sur de Guaparo Redoma
Tel.: 32.2118

More well-known as the home of the city's professional basketball team, the Trotamundos, The Forum is increasingly the choice for large-scale performances of all kinds, from flamenco dancers and rock groups to the Moscow Circus.

ORCHESTRA

The Symphony Orchestra of Carabobo, directed by José Calabrese (Tel.: 22.0510) is very popular. Orchestras from all over the country are featured at the Festivales de Cabriales, a series of open-air concerts staged at 11:00 a.m. Sundays in the Parque Negra Hipolita, from November through March. The orchestras also play in the Festivales del Mar at 6:00 p.m. Sundays on the Malecón in Puerto Cabello from April to October.

ART MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Ateneo de Valencia
Avda. Bolívar a Calle Salóm
Tel.: 57.6573, 84.014,
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday)

Along with changing exhibits, the museum features a permanent salon of prize winners from past editions of the prestigious Salón de Artes Visuales Arturo Michelena. Since July 1993, the museum has hosted "Encounter with the Artists" every Sunday at 11:00 a.m., which coincides with the artists' exhibitions.

Galería de Arte Ascaso
Avda. Monseñor Adams, No. 105-48
El Viñedo
Tel.: 21.3227
Hours: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
3:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday)

Galería Lozano y Lozado
Avda. Andrés Eloy Blano a Calle 140
El Viñedo
Tel.: 22.0055
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 3:00 p.m. - 6 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
Emphasis on top-name artists

La Casa de los Celis
(Museo de Arte y Historia del estado Carabobo)
Avda. Soublette
Tel.: 89.121
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Friday)
9:00 a.m. - noon (Saturday, Sunday)

Considered the finest example of colonial architecture in the city, the museum is named after the family that occupied it from 1837 - 1960. Separate rooms feature works of Valencia's most famous early artists: Arturo Michelena, Antonio Herrera Toro, and Andrés Mujica, with colonial religious art, a colonial kitchen and some examples from local anthropological digs.

Museo de la Cultura Braulio Salazar
Calle 102, Cerca de Parque Metropolitana
Tel: 47.2049
Hours: Temporarily closed for repairs
Art exhibits, theater, workshops, etc.

Sala de Exposiciones Braulio Salazar
Avda. Andrés Eloy Blanco
Tel.: 21.1214
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - noon, 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Sunday)
Art exhibits, concerts

Simonetti
Avda. Bolívar
Al lado de Liceo Pedro Gual
Tel.: 84.065
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
11:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday)
Emphasis on contemporary art by well-known artists.

Zeppia
Avda. Principal, No. 129-80
Las Acacias
Tel.: 21.2567
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - noon, 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

HISTORICAL SITES AND MUSEUMS

The city's principal historical sites are in El Centro, near Plaza Bolívar. Facing the plaza is the city's colonial Basilica Cathedral de Nuestra Señora de la Anunciación, which went under construction in the mid-1700s. It contains a statue of the Virgen del Socorro, which was the first statue to be crowned in Venezuela with papal permission.

Also in this area is Plaza Sucre, with the colonial Iglesia de San Francisco, University of Carabobo Law School, and the beautiful Teatro Municipal, designed by Luis Malaussena in the style of the Paris Opera House and inaugurated in 1895. The theater was closed in 1976 to undergo renovations for the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Carabobo the next year, but the work took eight years rather than eight months.

Behind the theater is the modern public library, Biblioteca Pública Manuel Feo La Cruz, which is closed on Sundays. Its hours are 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., Monday to Saturday (Tel.: 81.411).

The library hosts a small gallery of exhibits of popular naif art upstairs and a ground-floor gallery with changing exhibits. In addition, the library sponsors a Community Information

Service (Tel.: 87.974) that provides information about local public services, including legal and medical assistance.

Peñalver, in Plaza Sucre, is one of the few colonial residences whose facade has remained unchanged since it was built. Now home to a drama school, it is located opposite the state capitol, formerly a convent, and was finished shortly before the end of the 18th century.

On the corner of Avda. Soublette is La Casa de la Estrella, now the headquarters for the Carabobo State History Center (Tel.: 57.4620). On March 16, 1812, sessions of the national Congress were held in this building, during which executive power was transferred to Valencia, making it the federal capital of the United States of Venezuela. In 1830, Congress again met here. Venezuela's sovereignty was decreed, General José Antonio Páez was ratified as the independent country's first elected president and Valencia became the republic's capital.

Some of the city's other popular museums include:

Casa Páez
Avda. Boyacá a Calle Paéz
Tel.: 57.0685/8252
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - noon, 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
9:00 a.m. - noon (Saturday, Sunday)

This was the home of Venezuela's first elected president, General José Antonio Páez, who lived here when Valencia was capital of Venezuela. The house features a patio with murals depicting the nine battles Páez fought, and some of his favorite sayings inscribed over the windows.

The building is now home to some 10 local groups including the Club de Excursionistas de Valencia, Sociedad Bolivariana, Club de Amigos de Valencia and the Club de Escritores. A library, focusing on historical themes, is open to the public.

Restoration has recently been completed on the cellar, which served as a prison during the administration of dictator General Juan Vicente Gómez who ruled from 1956-59. Prisoners' grafitti has been conserved and arms and other military artifacts are now displayed there.

Museo de Antropología
Avda. Las Ferias
Tel.: -
Hours: 8:00 a.m. to noon (Tuesday to Saturday)

The museum and its annex house a large collection of artifacts of abundant local digs, including the remains of early indigenous groups who considered Lake Valencia sacred. Featured are not only skeletal remains and jewelry, but some very unusual miniature petroglyphs.

PARKS AND GARDENS

Among the most developed and popular park areas is the Parque Negra Hipólita, which includes a children's art gallery, children's play area, soda fountain and performance area.

Just south of Avda. Cedeño is Parque de los Enanitos, another area that features artwork of numerous storybook figures.

Acuario de Valencia
Avda. Andrés Eloy Blanco
Tel: 57.4739
Hours: 9:00 a.m - 6:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Sunday)
This aquarium houses one of the best collections of native fish in Latin America, including fresh-water, bottle-nosed dolphins from the Orinoco River; it also has a reptile house and small zoo with endemic species.

Andrés Pérez Mujica Sculpture Park
Avda. Monseñor Adam
Entre Avda. Carabobo y Avda. San Félix
Hours: Daylight hours
Named for the well-known Valencia sculptor of the late 19th and early 20th century, the park features works of dozens of famous Venezuelan sculptors such as Víctor Valera, Cornelius Zitman and Colette Delozanne.

Parque Metropolitana
Entre Avda. Lara y El Trigal-El Viñedo,
Cerca del Valencia-Puerto Cabello Carretera
Hours: Daylight hours
Following the Cabriales River, the park is a favorite spot for family outings and subject of countless paintings since the early days of the city's founding.

SHOPPING

As with Caracas, downtown of Valencia, south of Avda. Cedeno between Calle Vargas and Calle Comercio, is one of the best places to find bargains and reasonably-priced shoes and clothing, *piñata* stores, and fabrics. The *buhoneros*, or street vendors, spread out their wares anywhere space permits, usually on plastic sheets that can be quickly collected when a police officer is spotted.

Most of the principal in-town shopping centers are found on or near Avda. Bolívar Norte. These include Centro Comercial Caribbean Plaza, one block west of Avda. Bolívar on Avda. 102. Torre Camoruco is one of the most upscale shopping centers downtown, occupying the first three floors of this building. Multicentro El Viñedo, a block north of the overpass, is a huge addition to the list of shopping centers, which also includes Centro Profesional y Comercial on Avda. Bolívar and the Centro Comercial Guaparo, on the northern end of the avenue.

Centro Comercial Siglo XXI, on Avda. Boyaca in La Viña, has primarily upscale shops, a movie theatre, several restaurants and a supermarket.

Valencia's largest shopping area is the Big Low Center, on the eastern side of the freeway, opposite the entrance to Zona Industrial I. Arranged like early U.S. shopping centers, all the stores and restaurants have outside access; the parking lot is huge. Also noteworthy are:

Shopping Center, a mammoth mall on Avda. Andrés Eloy Blanco; the C.C. Trigal Sur, at the El Trigal-El Viñedo exit of the freeway, which houses a large supermarket and one of the most accessible post offices in the city; and Patio El Trigal on Avda. Mañongo at Calle Neptuno, which is a multi-tiered center arranged in a series of islands.

Beco and Maxy's, two Caracas-based department stores, are both on Avda. Bolívar Norte. Makro, the super discount warehouse store, was still under construction as of summer 1993, located next to the Caracas-Valencia freeway at the south edge of town.

SPORTS AND RECREATION

As in Caracas, there are a number of private country clubs, gyms and public sporting facilities. See the chart on the following page for country club information.

GYMS

Aquarius
Avda. Alejo Zuloaga
No.95-84
Trigal Central
Tel.: 42.7424
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
Facilities: Multi-force machines, weights, aerobics and sauna.
Fees: Bs.350 ($3.84) inscription, plus Bs.1,350 ($14.83) a month.

Caribbean Spa
C.C. Caribbean Plaza, Piso 2
Tel.: 21.8587/8067
Hours: 5:30 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Saturday)
Facilities: Aerobics, multi-force equipment, weights and sauna.
Fees: No incription fee; Bs.2,200 ($24.17) monthly with restricted hours. Other plans include use of all areas and services at any hour, for no inscription, and Bs.3,000 ($32.96) per month.

Fitness Forum
Tony García affiliation
Trotamundos Forum Complex
Tel.: 42.2118
Hours: 6:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
Facilities: Multi-force equipment
Fees:. Inscription is Bs.500 ($5.49), plus monthly fees of Bs.1,700 ($18.68), with special discount tariffs for advance payment.

Hotel Inter-Continental Valencia's Sports Club
La Viña
Tel.: 21.1000
Hours: 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)
Noon - 8:00 p.m. (Friday to Sunday)
9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. (Tuesday to Sunday, pool only)
Facilities: Swimming pool, gym, sauna. A hotel "credit card" allows charges to be paid off monthly.
Fees: Bs.4,000 ($43.95) per year, Bs.2,000 ($21.97) for children.

VALENCIA COUNTRY CLUBS

	Asociación Carabobeño de Tiro	Club Hípico de Carabobo	Guataparo Country Club
Membership cost	Bs.60,000	Bs.750,000	Bs.500,000
Swimming pool	✧	✧	✧
Playing field	✧	✧	
Jogging/tennis	✧	✧	✧
Gym	✧	✧	
Massage		✧	
Sauna/steam bath	✧	✧	
Horse riding		✧	
Golf			✧
Jacuzzi			
Playground	✧	✧	✧
Card rooms	✧	✧	✧
Conference rooms	✧	✧	✧
Restaurant	✧	✧	✧
Chapel			
Telephone	22.9176	67.4243	23.0801
Area	Guaparo	Guaparo	Guataparo

Nautilus
Calle 149, No. 100-65
Tel.: 21.4083
Hours: Women 6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Mixed 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., 9:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
7:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Saturday)
Facilities: Aerobics, weights, exercise machines.
Fees: Bs.2,600 ($28.57) monthly, combined; aerobics, three times weekly, Bs.1,800 ($19.78) a month; gym, Bs.1,600 ($17.58) a month.

Club Internaciónal	Valencia Country Club	La Hacienda Country Club
Bs.400,000	Bs.500,000	Bs.60,000
✧	✧	✧
✧	✧	✧
✧		✧
		✧
		✧
		✧
		✧
	✧	✧
✧	✧	✧
✧	✧	
✧	✧	✧
✧		
23.0373	21.2740	31.9232
Las Colinas de Gataparo	Miranda	Via San Luis

SPORTING EVENTS

BASEBALL

The city's professional baseball team, Los Magallanes, play their home games at Estadio José P. Colmenares on Calle Michelena at Avda. Eugenio Mendoza, south of Avda. Lara, in Industrial Carabobo (Tel.: 21.5144). Venezuela's baseball is considered the winter league by the U.S. teams, and it often attracts the participation of a number of pros and AAA players from the United States who want to sharpen or maintain their skills in the off season.

BASKETBALL

Valencia has a professional basketball team, the Trotamundos, which plays at the multi-purpose arena, The Forum (Tel.: 42.2118), which is just south of the Guaparo Redoma. Since the local basketball season runs opposite to that of the United States' season, many U.S. pros and aspiring players are found on the local rosters.

BULLFIGHTING

Bullfights draw huge crowds in the city, with Valencia boasting Latin America's second-largest bullring at Plaza Monumental (014-40.6719) at the south end of Avda. Las Ferias. Access is well marked from the freeway circling south around Valencia toward Campo Carabobo. With room for 27,000 people, the bullring is the second in size to the bullring in Mexico City.

The normal season corresponds to the dry season, roughly November to May, although occasional events may be scheduled at other off-season Sunday afternoons.

The Forum (Tel.: 42.2118) next to the Guaparo Redoma, also hosts an annual bullfighting fair between October and December; the 1993 event is scheduled for October.

HORSE RACING

Horse races are held every Friday from 6:00 p.m. and Saturday from 2:00 p.m. at the Hipódromo Nacional de Valencia. There is no admission charge, but men who wish to sit in the most formal section must wear a jacket and tie. The complex also houses a restaurant and bar.

DINING OUT

With the rare exception of several eateries in the industrial zone and a few off the beaten path, Avda. Bolívar is the place to go when searching for quality Valencia eating and drinking establishments, in a zone that offers something for every taste and pocketbook.

Those accustomed to Caracas prices will be pleasantly surprised to find that even in the most exclusive Valencia restaurant, a main dish rarely exceeds Bs.700 ($7.69), with the average per-person price in the nicer restaurants in the Bs.300-600 ($3.29-6.59) range. Likewise liquor is considerably less expensive, and it is not unusual to find a chilled mug of local beer for between Bs.35 ($.38) and Bs.50 ($.54).

The following is a sampling of the city's eateries, with the average per-person price for a a three-course meal (appetizer, main dish and dessert):

PRICE KEY

A= $35 or more (Bs.3,185)	D= $15 - $10 (Bs.1,365-Bs.910)
B= $35 - $25 (Bs.3,185-Bs.2,275)	E= $10 or less (Bs.910)
C= $25 - $15 (Bs.2,275-Bs.1,365)	

Ali Baba
Avda. Bolívar Norte
No. 109-66
Tel.: 21.0884
Price range: D
Arabic

Asociacion de Ganaderos
Avda. Circunvalacion entre Guaparo Redoma y Club Hipico
Tel.: 21.5057
Price range: D
Meat

Budapest
Avda. Carlos Sanda
El Viñedo
Tel.: -
Price range: D

Casa de Campo
Centro Comercial Paseo Las Industrias
Piso 2
Zona Industrial I
Tel. 33.2259
Price range: D
Live jazz often featured

Casa Valencia
Avda. Bolívar Norte
Tel.: 21.3057, 22.8494
Price range: C/D
Criollo

Chalet Suisse
Hotel Stauffer
HS Center
Avda. Bolívar Norte a Avda. 155
Tel.: 67.2870/3333
Price range: D
Swiss specialties

Club Campestre Mañongo
Callejón Mañongo
Tel.: 41.0411
Price range: D/E

Cuevas de Luis Candela
Avda. Bolívar
Tel.: 21.5028
Price range: D/E
Spanish

El Carruaje
Prolongación Calle Michelena
Centro Comercial Ara
Industrial Carabobo
Tel.: 33.2247, 34.3806
Price range: D
International

El Regio
Avda. Bolívar Norte
Centro Comercial Sacla
Tel.: 21.7633
Price range: D
International

El Toro Rojo
Avda. Bolívar
Tel.: 21.4232
Price range: D
Meat

Il Cantone
Avda. Bolívar Norte a Calle 145
Tel.: -
Price range: D
Italian

Koyoka
The Forum Complex
Sur de Guaparo Redoma
Tel.: 42.2218.
Price range: C/D
Chinese

La Grillade
Callejón Peña Pérez
Tel.: 21.6038
Price range: D
Grilled meat, Continental

La Hostería del Rey
No. 137-67
Avda. Bolívar Norte
Tel.: 21.1657
Price range: D

La Villa Madrid
Avda. Bolívar
No. 152-75
Tel.: 21.5681
Price range: D
Spanish

Las Carretas Club Campestre
Callejón Mañongo
Tel.: 42.8151
Price range: D/E
Criollo

Lay Yin
Avda. Monseñor Adam
No. 110-100
Tel.: 21.3331
Price range: D/E
Chinese

Marchica
Avda. Bolívar Norte
Tel.: 22.5288.
Price range: D
Seafood

Matricciana
Centro Comercial Majay
Avda. Bolívar Norte
Tel.: 21.3325
Price range: D/E

Mi Cabaña
Avda. Cuatricentenaria
Tel.: 23.0077/0061
Price range: D
Criollo

Nashville
Avda. Bolívar
La Alegria
Tel.: 22.0709
Price range: D
International

Pizzería La Pergola
Hotel Inter-Continental Valencia
Calle Juan Uslar
La Viña
Price range: E
Pizza

Restaurant Cabriales
Hotel Inter-Continental Valencia
Calle Juan Uslar
La Viña
Tel.: 21.1533/1681
Price range: C/D

Ristorante Villa Etrusca
Callejón El Mañongo
Tel.: 42.2886/2998
Price range: D

Tasca Terra Nossa
Avda. Bolívar Norte
Centro Comerical Las Acacias
Tel.: 21.8945
Price range: E
Spanish

The Country House
Centro Comercial Las Garcitas
Carretera Los Guayos
Tel.: 71.0698
Price range: D
Italian

Tiberius
Avda. Estadio
Tel.: 21.3374/3379
Price range: C/D
Italian and international

NIGHTCLUBS AND BARS

Prices vary considerably in local nightspots, often depending on the service and atmosphere. Many clubs are for members and their guests only; others are open to the public, but charge a cover fee. A few of the most popular nightspots include:

Bar Camoruco
Hotel Inter-Continental Valencia
Calle Juan Uslar
La Viña
Tel.: 21.1033

El Carruaje
Centro Comercial ARA
Avda. Michelena
Tel.: 34.3806

El Lagar de El Viñedo
Avda. Bolívar Norte a Avda. Monseñor Adam
Tel.: 22.0983

La Cueva de Luis Candela
Centro Comercial Los Sauces
Nivel Sótano
Tel.: 21.5028

La Villa Madríd
Avda. Bolívar Norte
Tel.: 21.1050

Mi Cabaña
Avda. Cuatricentenaria
Cerca la entrada a Guataparo Country Club
Tel.: 23.0061

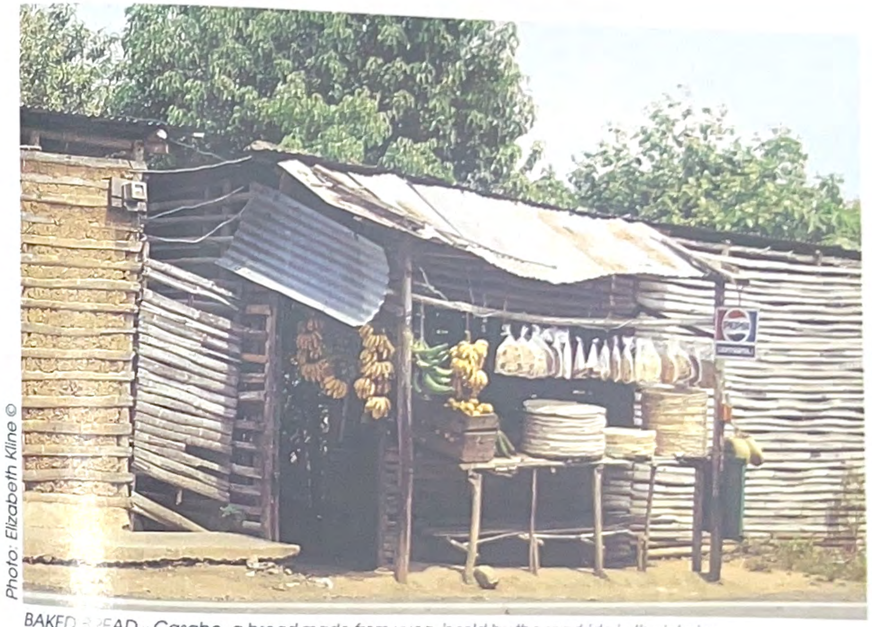


Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

BAKED BREAD - Casabe, a bread made from yuca, is sold by the roadside in the interior.

Photo: Karl Weidmann ©

CHAPTER XI

TOURIST SPOTS

TRAVELING OUTSIDE CARACAS

To really get the feel of living in Venezuela, venturing out of Caracas or other major cities is a must. In the interior of the country and in small towns, change has come at a slower pace, so there is more traditional architecture, people are generally more friendly and unique folkloric and religious traditions remain an important part of community life.

Weekend trips allow city dwellers to leave behind the hustle and bustle of the hectic metropolis, giving them the opportunity to enjoy everything that the Venezuelan country-side has to offer. Multitudinous beaches are scattered along the coast, while lush, verdant jungles await the adventurous in the interior. Elsewhere are the extensive plains of the *llanos* region and the immense open spaces of the Gran Sabana, beckoning the intrepid tourist.

Making elaborate plans or taking several weeks of vacation time is not necessary to discover Venezuela's charms. The important thing is to go and explore.

In general, prices for adventure and ecotourism are very high by Venezuelan standards, with most packages averaging a minimum of $100 (Bs.9,100) per day, per person, excluding airfare. These apply to the most popular destinations of Canaima and the Grand Sabana, ranches in the Llanos, remote areas of the Andes and Amazon jungle camps and the Los Roques island chain.

One concession has been a reduced price for resident tourists for many tours (normally quoted in bolívars) instead of the regular price (significantly higher and usually quoted in dollars) for foreign tourists. It is important to make resident status clear when booking to avoid being charged the foreign fare.

In contrast to remote adventure and ecotourism destinations, it is less expensive to visit places that are easier to reach and don't require special guides or transportation, such as Margarita and Puerto La Cruz, Coro, Morrocoy, Maracaibo and most of the Andes region.

Prices vary constantly, and the best way to keep abreast of the changes is to consult a travel agent's most recent Guía Aérea y Marítima de Venezuela and Gaceta Aérea guides for prices of tours and flights.

Hotels mentioned in this chapter conform to the key on the following page. All rooms are equipped with private bath, telephone, television, air conditioning, bar, restaurant and parking unless otherwise noted. Stars next to the name of the hotel indicate its rating by the

FALLIN' ANGEL - The world's highest waterfall, Angel Falls, plummets 3,212 feet.

Hotel Association of Venezuela. Prices for single or double rooms are listed in categories from A to E.

HOTEL KEY

A=More than $100 (Bs.9,100)
B=$100-$75 (Bs.9,100-Bs.6,825)
C=$75-$45 (Bs.6,825-Bs.3,822)
D=$45-$25 (Bs.3,822-Bs.2,275)
E=Below $25 (Bs.2,275)

Satellite programming	1	Nightclub	8
Beauty parlor	2	Swimming pool	9
Barber shop	3	Beach	10
Boutique	4	Sports facilities	11
Conference room	5	Sauna	12
Audio-visual equipment	6	Cooking facilities	13
Suites	7	Gymnasium	14

BEACHES

THE LITORAL

Traffic in Caracas can reach nightmare proportions, but the nightmare spreads along coastal roads during weekends and holidays as Caraqueños flee the crowds of the city. The vehicles of sun-worshipping motorists clog the highways in their attempt to reach the escape route, a long, narrow band of waterfront at the base of the coastal range north of Caracas known as El Litoral.

The main destination for beachgoers is east of La Guaira. Merging into La Guaira just along the coast is Macuto, named after the Indian chief Guaicamacuto. This is the beach station for the 15-minute cable car or *teleférico* to Caracas over the Avila mountain, which boasts at its top the state-owned Hotel Humboldt. It has been closed since its founding in 1957 except for one year of operation. The hotel's beds are made up and cutlery is laid out, and a guard can be persuaded to provide a quick tour for Bs.50 ($.55) per person. The *teleferico* has not been operating since 1988, awaiting repairs that are unlikely to be made until it, too, is privatized in late 1993 or 1994.

The public beach at Macuto has been popular since the 1800s and offers calm waters protected by a series of breakwaters, many informal seafood restaurants and a number of modest hotels.

Much of the coastline is too rocky for good swimming, but more popular, sandy beaches lie to the east. These include Naiguatá; Playa de Los Angeles; Camurí Chico; Camurí Grande, a favorite for surfers; Caraballeda, home to the *litoral's* only two five-star hotels; and Los Caracas, with an extensive sports complex. Sometimes the beaches near La Guaira are so badly polluted that swimming is banned. At this point, sunbathers head east.

Among the best eastern beaches are Todasana, La Sabana, and Caruao, but access is via the unpaved road which continues all the way to Chirimena and connects to Higuerote. During the dry season, this can be navigated with a regular auto, but a four-wheel drive vehicle is necessary during the rainy season.

Accommodation in Macuto:
(Tel. area code is 036)

Hotel Las Quince Letras (★★★)
Avda. La Playa y Calle San Andrés
Sector Punta Brisas
Tel.: 46.1430/1551
Fax: 46.1432
Services: 5,9
Price range: C

Hotel Macuto (★★★)
Calle 3, Sector Alamo
Entre Avda. La Playa y Avda. Alamo
Tel.: 44.561/563
Services: 2,4,5,7,9
Price range: C

Hotel Riviera (★★)
Calle San Bartolomé y Callejón Nueve
Tel.: 44.313, 45.938
Services: 7, children's playground
Price range: D

Hotel Royal Atlantic (★★★)
Caribe
Tel.: 91.250
Services: 7,9
Price range: C

Hotel Santiago (★★)
Avda. La Playa y Calle 2
Tel.: 44.214/118
Services: 7, with jacuzzi
Price range: D

Meliá Caribe (★★★★★)
Caribe
Tel.: 94.5555
Fax: 94.1509, or in Caracas at (02) 762.9314
Services: 1,2,3,4,8,9,11, helicopter shuttle to airport
Price range: A

Posada de Hidalgo (★★)
Avda. La Playa y Calle 3, Sector Alamo
Tel.: 44.107
Price range: D

Sheraton Macuto Resort (★★★★★)
Caribe
Tel.: 94.4300
Fax: 94.4318
Services: 1,2,3,4,8,9,10,11, helicopter shuttle to airport
Price range: A

BARLOVENTO

Trade winds blowing into this region, which is an hour and a half from Caracas, encouraged the growth of lush tropical foliage that provides a dramatic contrast to the arid landscapes of other beaches.

The high waves at Chirimena's beach make it a popular magnet for surfers. However, the calm, though murky, waters of Higuerote and Río Chico, are more favored by families because they have a larger variety of hotels.

Laguna de Tacarigua National Park offers visitors not only 28 kilometers of deserted sandy beach ideal for swimming, but excellent bird watching in the narrow channel between the lagoon and the Caribbean, which is home to the fishing village of Tacarigua de la Laguna. Roseate spoonbill and other large water birds feed in the shallow waters of the channel, and scarlet ibis and white heron return to spend the night, darkening the branches of huge mangrove trees in the late afternoon.

WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST WORRY

At the **SHERATON MACUTO RESORT**, we know what it means for you and your family to enjoy a few days together relaxing, without the slightest worry. We are experts in making you feel very good... So don't wait any longer. Call us and escape from your work and routine. Come with the one who you enjoy life with most.

Reservations:
(02) 959.1311

More than just sun, sea and sand!!!

Sheraton Macuto
RESORT
LA GUAIRA
TELEPHONE: 031.944.300, FAX: 031.944.317
TELEX: (395) 31165 SHEMAVC
TELEPHONES: 959.2844, FAX: 261.3491
Centro Comercial Ciudad Tamanaco, 1st Section, Level C-2
2nd. Floor, Office Nº 201, CHUAO, CARACAS, VENEZUELA

ITT SHERATON: THE NATURAL CHOICE

Accommodation in Barlovento:

Campomar (***)
Via Higuerote
Tel.: (034) 74.315, or in Caracas at (02) 951.5787
Services: 7,8,9
Price range: C

Fiesta Inn Aguasal (****)
Aguasal, Higuerote
Tel.: (034) 23.1711-1720
Services: 4,7,9,13
Price range: B

Club Miami (**)
A las orillas de
la Laguna de Tacarigua
Tel.: (042) 86.024
Services: 10
Price range: C

LOS ROQUES

The best of Venezuela's beaches are found in this Caribbean paradise of 40 large islands and 300 smaller ones, many of which are only tiny sand cays, rocks and coral reefs. Just a 45-minute flight from Caracas, Los Roques offers a host of pristine beaches surrounded by crystal-clear water. These reefs are home to a variety of fish and marine life, making snorkeling and scuba-diving a must. More recently, Los Roques also has been a popular destination for sports fishing, particularly for bonefish in the shallows and for marlin and tuna in the deep sea.

Marine turtles can be seen laying their eggs on the land, home to frigate birds, scarlet ibises and herons as well as iguanas and lizards. The cool evenings, however, discourage annoying insects.

On Cayo Estación Sur, figurines have been found of squat human figures with rectangular heads - remnants of previous island life.

There is no fresh water on the islands, and everything but the fish is imported, contributing to the high expense of a visit. However, despite the $120 (Bs.10,920) average day trip, beachgoers report the journey as worthwhile.

Most travel agencies offer a variety of options, including day trips, fishing packages and overnight stays in *posadas* on the main island or on yachts or houseboats. The airlines CAVE and Aerotuy have started regular services to Los Roques and also offer yacht tours.

ROUTE OF THE SUN

The seemingly endless number of beautiful beaches along the picturesque Caribbean between Puerto La Cruz and Cumaná in eastern Venezuela have given the region the name "Route of the Sun."

There are frequent commercial flights to both Cumaná and Barcelona, but the driving route is easy, taking only six and a half hours. Once out of town, the road begins to climb almost at once, providing a panoramic view of the many islands and fingers of land extending into Santa Fé Bay, which are all part of Mochima National Park. This includes all the islands from Islas Borrachas to the west of Puerto La Cruz and the coastal zone beginning by Guanta, to Barbacoas.

Many people head for the small beaches on the islands by boat. However, the shoreline beaches are generally more attractive with palm trees, instant access from the highway, and nearby seaside eating places. Some of the best-known coastal beaches are Playas Colorada, Arapito and Arapo.

Further down the coast is Barbacoas, well-known for its handicrafts and especially rag dolls, known locally as *muñecas de trapo*.

Lodging along the coastal road between Puerto La Cruz and Cumaná is almost non-existent, and virtually the only option is at Los Tucusitos, a small pleasant villa-style lodging across from Playa Colorado. There is no phone, but reservations can be made in Caracas (Tel.: 02.952.1826).

BARCELONA

Most beachgoers tend to whiz right by the city of Barcelona as they head for Puerto La Cruz and beyond. However, Barcelona, founded in 1671 on the west banks of the Neverí River and an important port for food shipments to the nearby Netherlands Antilles, is distinctively attactive for its historical architecture.

In Plaza Boyacá is the cathedral, Iglesia de San Cristóbal, begun in 1748 but not completed for 25 years due to earthquakes and other setbacks. The remains of Italian martyr St. Celestino are inside.

The government palace is also in this area. Next door is the Museo de la Tradición, the oldest existing house in Barcelona, built in 1671. Slaves were once sold outside this building, which today houses a set of silver spurs said to have belonged to José Tomás Boves, the Spanish fighter who terrorized Bolívar's forces. The museum is open daily from 8:00 a.m. -

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

ROCKY REEF - Coral reefs and sandy beaches make Los Roques one of Venezuela's most treasured tourist spots.

noon and 3:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m., except in December, when opening hours are 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Facing Plaza Bolívar and Plaza Miranda, on Avda. 5 de Julio, is the Casa Fuerte, originally a monastery. It was confiscated by the republic and in 1816 was fitted with cannons for the defense of Barcelona. Although Spanish forces held back the first attack, Casa Fuerte was destroyed in 1817.

Barcelona has its beaches as well, which are both at Lecherías. The nearby 800-hectare mega-complex being developed in El Morro as well as the hundreds of vacation home condominiums has made this area a sure tourist site.

Accommodation in the Barcelona area:
(Tel. area code is 081.)

Doral Beach (****)
Avda. Américo Vespucio
El Morro
Tel.: 81.2222, or in Caracas
at (02) 781.1833/6545
Fax: 81.4344
Services: 2,3,4,7,9,10,11,12,14
Price range: B

Hostería El Morro
Avda. Américo Vespucio
El Morro
Tel.: 81.4423/1311, or in Caracas through
Majestic at (02) 21.0356/5913
Services: 1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,11
Price range: B

Hotel Puerto Sol Suites/Puerto Playa Suites
Calle Arismendi
Lecherías
Tel.: 81.3522, or in Caracas at (02) 92.0202
Fax: 81.2646
Services: 1,4,5,6,7,9, jacuzzi, laundry
Price range: B

Maremare Golden Rainbow Resort (*****)
Avda. Américo Vespucio y Avda. R-17
El Morro
Tel.: 81.1011 or in Caracas at (02) 563.7646
Fax: 81.4494
Services: 4,5,7,9,11,12,14
Price range: A/B

PUERTO LA CRUZ

This sprawling, modern city was once a simple fishing village that sprung up around one of the country's largest natural bays. The construction of an oil refinery nearby changed the area completely, but it is still one of Venezuelans' favorite tourist resorts.

The heart of the tourist zone is along Paseo Colón, a wide beachfront boulevard with the Hotel Meliá Puerto La Cruz serving as the anchor at its eastern end and the ferry terminal for connection to Margarita marking its western extreme. Between them is a kilometer-long strip littered with hotels, restaurants, bars, shops, nightspots and souvenir shops.

The public beach is a wide band of white sand, bordered with palm trees, and offers a good place for collecting seashells.

Because of the Meliá's well-established image, the best restaurants and most popular nightspots are concentrated at that end of the strip. Among them are Brasero Grill, La Boite de Brasero and Parador del Puerto, while good, inexpensive seafood is available at most of the beachfront restaurants.

For nightlife, two favorites are the Club Guatacarazo on Paseo Colón with its costumed waiters and loud, crazy atmosphere, and Caribiano, which has a large dance floor.

Accommodation in Puerto La Cruz:
(Tel. area code is 081.)

Christina Suites (****)
Avda. Municipal y Calle Maneiro
Tel.: 67.4712, or in Caracas at (02) 261.1962
Fax: 67.5058
Services: 2,4,5,7,9,12,14, mini bars in all rooms
Price range: B

Hotel Rasil Puerto La Cruz (****)
Paseo Colón
Tel.: 67.2422/2535/4311/2713
Fax: 67.3121
Services: 4,5,7
Price range: B

Meliá Puerto La Cruz (*****)
Paseo Colón
Tel.: 69.1311, or in Caracas at (02) 762.9314
Services: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,14
Price range: A/B

CUMANA

Cumaná, capital of Sucre state, is the oldest town on the Venezuelan mainland, founded by the Spanish in 1515 with primitive missions of wood and straw. However, the official founding is attributed to Diego Fernández de Zerpa in Nov. 24, 1569.

The town's early days are depicted in The Monument to the Foundation of the City, which pictures one of the Franciscan missionaries and a Cumanagoto Indian. The peaceful relationship depicted in the painting did not last for long, shattered when the Spanish conquistadors began enslaving the Indians, who rebelled in a series of bloody battles.

In the older section of town near the Castillo de San Antonio is Cumaná's relatively new cathedral. Within is the Cross of Pardon, so-called because of the legend of a sinful woman who embraced it and begged God to forgive her. Observers were unable to separate her body from the cross, which they took as a sign that she had been forgiven. The legend says that anyone who embraces the cross will be pardoned for their sins also.

North of the Cathedral along the adjacent side streets is the site where the Saturday market is held. Bordering the plaza is the government palace, and next to it, the Ateneo of Cumaná.

Next door is the restored home that was the birthplace of poet and cultural figure, Andrés Eloy Blanco. Blanco wrote the poem, "Paint Me Little Black Angels," which urges the artist who painted a fair-skinned Virgin on a religious canvas to paint the accompanying angels black.

Further south on Calle Sucre is the Anthropology and History Museum (Tel.: 66.2635), the birthplace of another well-known native poet, José Antonio Ramos Sucre, and the state's tourism office (Tel.: 24.449). All these places close for several hours at noon and the museums are usually closed on Mondays.

Nearby is the fairly new Iglesia Santa Inés, constructed after one of the earthquakes that repeatedly took their toll on this area. The church is named for the saint who was said to have saved the town from an Indian attack.

Next to it are the ruins of Castillo de Santa María de la Cabeza, the residence of the Spanish governor, built between 1669 and 1673. The nearby former Convent of San Francisco at Plaza

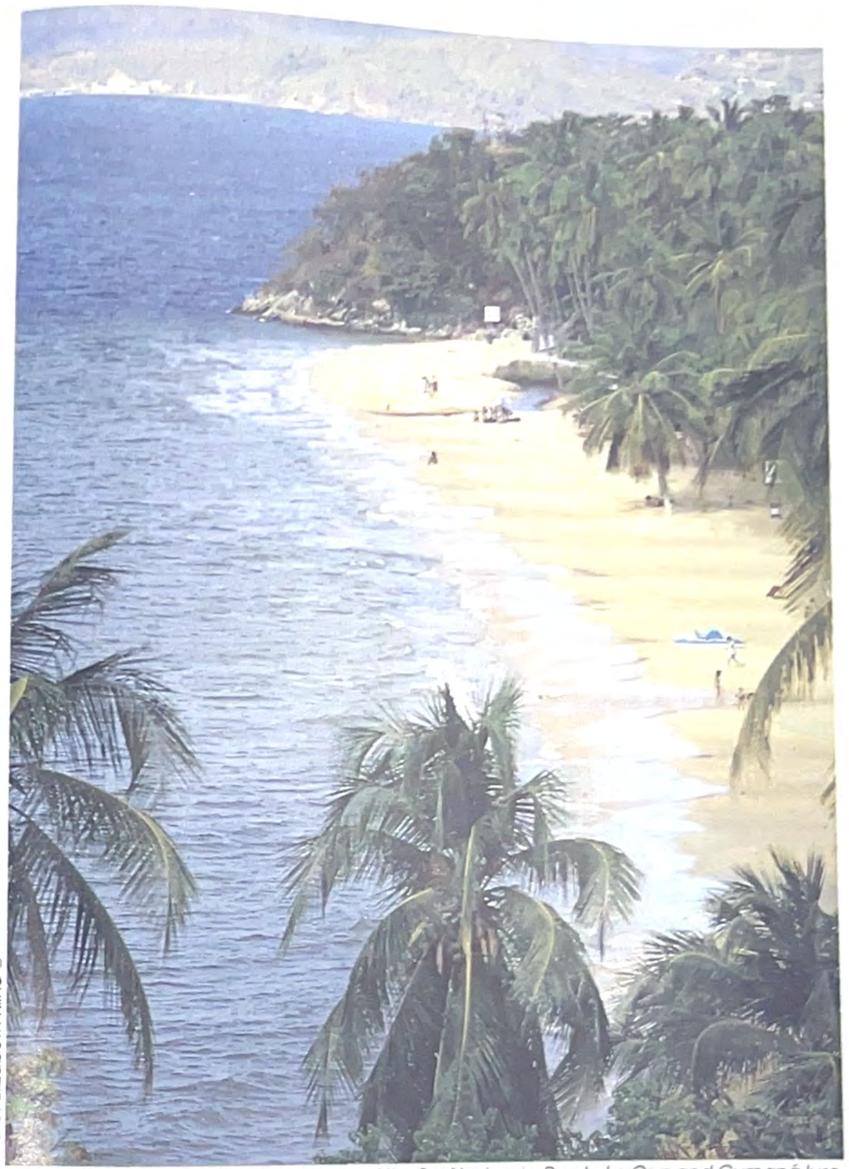


Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

SUN STRIP - Beaches along the "Route of the Sun" between Puerto La Cruz and Cumaná lure sun worshipers.

Rivero was the site of the first church school on the South American continent.

Bordering the river to the west is the very pretty Guaiquerí Park. North of the Mariño bridge, along the east side of the river, is another inviting site, Ayacucho Park, named for another of Venezuela's heroes of independence who was a native of Cumaná, José Antonio Sucre - popularly known as the Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho. Within the park is the Museo Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho (Tel.: 24.211).

The city's most famous landmark is the Castillo or Fuerte San Antonio de la Eminencia, completed in 1686. It was built to protect the nearby salt fields from Dutch raids and is open for visits, with no admission charge. The salt fields themselves, which can be visited only with a special permit from the salt production company, stretch magnificantly out into the distance.

The ferry shuttle to Margarita and the Araya Península is also found in Cumaná. Information on the frequently changing fares and estimated departure times are recommended (Tel.: 093.26.230).

Accommodation in Cumaná:
(Tel. area code is 093.)

Hotel Cumanagoto (★★★★)
Avda. Universidad
Tel.: 65.3040/3090
Services: 5,7,8,9,10,11
Price range: B/C

Hotel Minerva (★★★★)
Avda. Perimetral
Tel.: 66.2703/4471
Services: 7,9,14
Price range: C

Hotel Los Bordones (★★★★)
Avda. Universidad
Tel.: 65.3555/3622
Services: 5,7,8,9,10,11
Price range: B/C

MORROCOY NATIONAL PARK

One of the most visited areas along the central coast is Morrocoy National Park in Falcón state, a grouping of 24 islands and keys with beautiful beaches and abundant marine life.

Building is not permitted on the islands, but camping is - and is very popular over long weekends such as Holy Week and Carnival.

Tucacas and Chichiriviche, the two main seaside towns in the park, are separated by a projection of land known as Cerro Chichiriviche, home to many mammals, including deer, honey anteaters, *lapa*, wild pigs, foxes, monkeys, *picure* (a medium-sized rodent of the agouti family), opposums, and *cunaguaro* (a small, spotted wildcat).

In the surrounding waters, fish abound in great variety. Among the major types found are sardine, *cazón*, (a small shark), rays, *lisa*, and *cachama* (both the black and white ones).

Snorkeling, scuba diving and windsurfing are favorite pastimes for visitors. Some islands offer shade with inshore lagoons, while some, such as Cayo Pelón, are just treeless strips of sand. Names of the other destinations give some indication of their use. Cayo Pescadores is favored by fishermen, while Isla de Pájaros, which cannot be landed on, is a nesting area for frigate birds.

Shuttle service to the islands and keys, many of which have refreshment stands, is available both from Tucacas and Chichiriviche. Cayo Sombrero, probably the best known and most popular island, is situated more or less midway between the two.

The main destinations from Tucacas are Paiclás, Playa Azul, Cayo del Medio, Playa Mero, Playuela, Playuelita, Boca Seca, Playa Norte, Costa de los Muertos and Cayo Sombrero. Chichiriviche is a stepping stone to Cayos Muerto, Sal, Pelón, Borracho, and Sombrero.

Prices for launches range between Bs.450 and Bs.1,300 ($4.95 and $14.29), depending on destination. That includes a round trip for up to seven passengers, with reliable pick-up at a pre-arranged hour.

A number of caves can also be visited by boat. The best known is the Cueva del Indio, which houses rocks decorated with petroglyphs.

TUCACAS

In the past decade, Tucacas has grown from a sleepy fishing village to a place where modern high-rise condominiums fight for space along the prime frontage area.

The main street through town leading to the park entrance has been paved, and small restaurants and bars have sprung up along its edges. One good eating spot is Venemar Restaurant/Marisquería, on the right-hand side near the park.

The closest of the keys, Punta Brava, is reached by bridge with no boat trip involved, although there is a token entry fee. It has an extensive beach and is a favorite area for windsurfers and owners of small sailboats.

The formerly modest marina has been enlarged and the dock for shuttle service to the islands is opposite Venemar Restaurant.

Accommodation in Tucacas:
(Tel. area code is 042.)

Conjunto Náutico Residencial Morrocoy (★★★★)
El Camino entre Tucacas y Chichiriviche
Tel.: 84.022/506/508
Fax: 84.211/379
Services: 14
Price range: B

Hotel Manaure (★★★)
Avda. Silva
Tel.: 84.286
Services: 5,7,9
Price range: B/C

A few individuals in town have begun offering bed-and-breakfast-style accommodation. These are generally only available through Caracas travel agencies and are expensive, with payment in dollars.

CHICHIRIVICHE

Quite distinct from Tucacas, Chichiriviche offers many tourist facilities, ranging from large hotels to intimate posadas. Those on the main entrance road or on the south side are preferable to options on the north side, where flooding after rain is a constant problem.

The access road to Chichiriviche is 12 km from the main highway, through the Cuare Wildlife Refuge, which attracts thousands of water birds, the most colorful of which are the *corocoro*, or scarlet ibis.

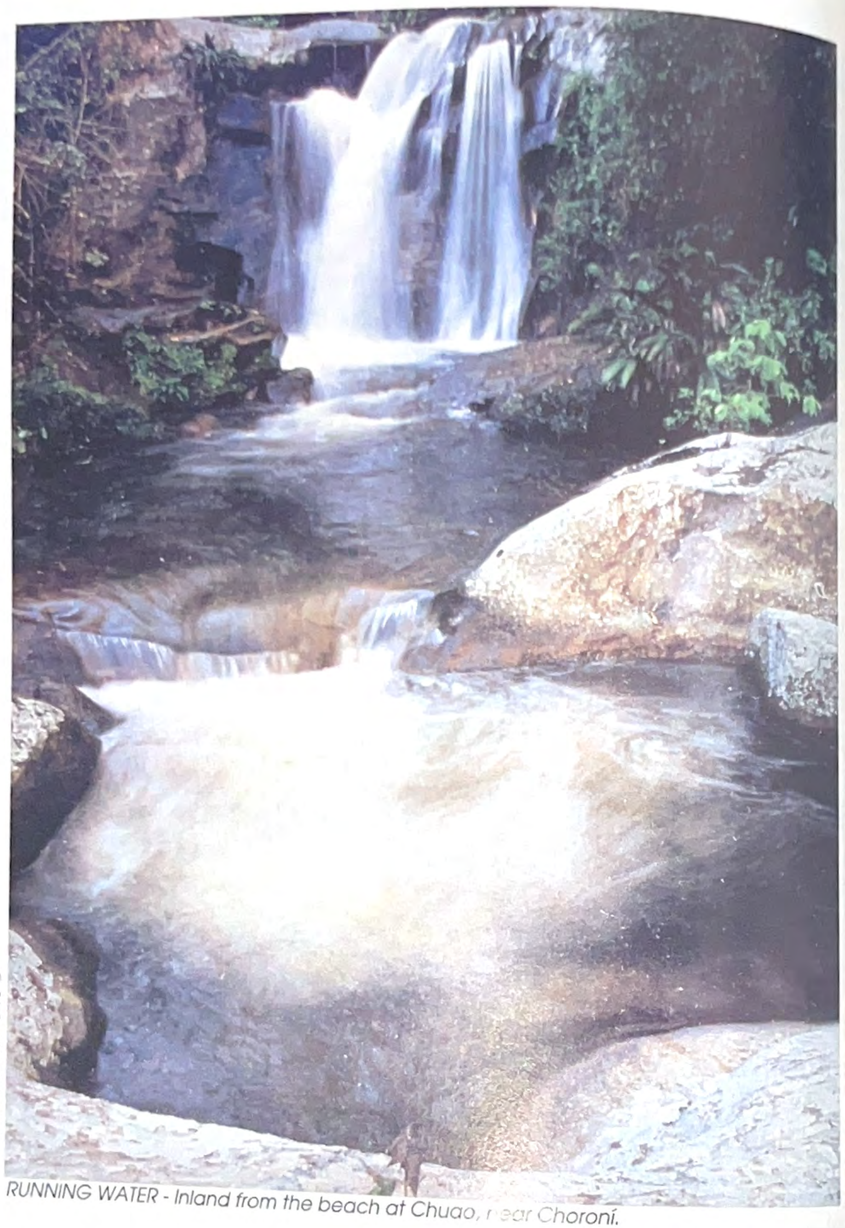


Photo: Mario Corvetto ©

RUNNING WATER - Inland from the beach at Chuao, near Choroní.

As with Tucacas, the main attraction in Chichiriviche is not the town, but the beaches of the nearby islands and keys.

Accommodation in Chichiriviche:
(Tel. area code is 042.)

Hotel Las Garzas (***)
Avda. Principal
Tel.: 86.126
Services: 5,7,8,9,10, shuttle to beach
Price range: C

Hotel Mario (***)
Avda. Principal
Tel.: 86.114
Services: 2,3,4,5,7,8,10, shuttle to beach
Price range: C

Plaza Hotel Vaya Vaya (***)
Via Fábrica de Cemento
Tel.: 86.304/082
Services: 4,5,7,8
Price range: C

Villa Marina (***)
Via Fábrica de Cemento
Tel.: 86.441/759/503
Services: 5,7,8,13
Price range: B/C

BEACHES OF HENRI PITTIER NATIONAL PARK

The hour-long drive through the Henri Pittier National Park to the sea is as much of a visual treat as its stunning beaches. A succession of varied landscapes characterize the area, ranging from cactus-covered hills and cloud forest to dense tropical plant growth. Animal life abounds, especially avifauna, with some 520 of the 1,250 known species found in Venezuela, including the blood-eared parakeet and harpy eagle. Among the many mammals in the park are tapirs, puma, fox, deer, lapa, *cunaguaro*, honey anteaters, porcupines, three-toed sloths and howler monkeys. The most abundant snakes are *mapanare*, coral, rattlesnake, and those known locally as *tigra cazadora, cazadora negra, verdegallo* and *la reinita*.

There are two entrances to this 107,800-hectare (269,500 acres) park from Maracay: One via El Limón (turning off Avda. Bolívar at the western edge of the downtown area) to Ocumare de la Costa, El Playón, Cata, and Cuyagua; and via Avda. Las Delicias, leading to Choroní and Puerto Colombia.

Cata Bay, the prime destination on the El Limón route, is one of the most picturesque in the country, with its crescent-shaped, palm-tree lined sandy beach at the base of a mountain range. While there are concession stands, restrooms, and a first-aid station, hotels are noticeably absent. The main reason for this is the great scarcity of drinking water. There are two high-rise apartment towers along the beach, where residents sometimes rent units to tourists, but these towers have had critical water shortages since their construction.

Continuing east beyond Cata is the beach at Cuyagua, considered by aficionados as one of the best surfing sites in the country. The few lodging facilities in this area are found in El Playón, west of Cata. A good choice is Hotel Montemar on Calle Vargas, which has no phone but is relatively inexpensive.

Entering Henri Pittier National Park via Avda. Las Delicias is the Las Cocuizas Recreational Area, which offers a lovely park area with picnic shelters, restrooms and a stream running through the middle for swimming. It is closed on Mondays.

On the coast, Puerto Colombia does not have as large or as attractive a beach as Cata, but

it tends to attract significantly more visitors since there are many lodging facilities in the port village. Adjacent Choroní, a charming fishing village, was once the center of a rich cacao-growing region where *haciendas* abounded.

A number of inexpensive, informal restaurants and bars are also available near the waterfront, where sensual dances are performed to the *tambores* drums on the weekends. Modern civilization has been slow to come to this area across the mountains from Caracas. Accommodation is generally basic, and phone lines have only recently been installed.

The main beach here, Playa Grande, is large and tree-lined, but not as beautiful as Chuao, accessible by a 20-minute boat ride. Further along the coast is Cepe, another unspoilt and idyllic beach.

Accommodation in Puerto Colombia and Choroní:

Club Cotoperix
Tel. (02) 951.6226 (Caracas reservations)
Fax: 951.7741
Services: 1,5,6,8
Price Range: B/C

Hotel Alemania
Tel.: (02) 986.2686 (Caracas reservations)
Services : Cold water only
Price range: C

Hotel Montañita
Tel.: (043) 91.1132
Services: -
Price range: C

La Posada Humboldt
Tel.: (02) 284.7247 (Caracas reservations)
Services: 13
Price range: B

Posada Alfonso
Tel.: None
Services: Very basic; kitchen facilities; cold water only
Price range: C

BEACHES NORTH OF MARACAIBO

Following the route north from Maracaibo, marked El Moján, are a string of inviting beaches, with gentle surf and shallow water. Most are marked and can be reached directly from the highway. Though shadeless, many *cabañas* dot the shoreline.

One of the most popular beaches is Caimare Chico, a wide band of white sand with a recently built tourist complex that offers a swimming pool, restaurant and bar.

Bordering the highway and beaches are many casual, inexpensive, family-oriented restaurants with fish specialties.

Introducing the options for nature Traveling in Venezuela... away from the crowds.

Your Selection...

- Bird Watching
- Natural History Trips
- Nature Oriented Soft Adventures
  ...Hard Adventures too
- Nature Photography
- Day Tour Kayaking
- Scuba Diving, snorkeling
- Gran Sabana...lodge or camping
- Choroní. Far away from the crowds...
- Sport Fishing in the Amazon and Llanos (Peacock-bass, Payara...)
- Self-drive Guided "*Caravanas*" to Los Llanos, Gran Sabana, Amazonas
- "Especiales" Week-end Programs

Great places you dream about knowing...

- Angel Falls
- Hato Piñero
- Canaima National Park
- Orinoco River and the Amazon Rain Forest
- Cloud Forest of Henri Pittier National Park ...and others
- The Andes and Andean Piedmont
- Los Llanos... with Llaneros

We know very well you are not a Tourist, now you are a resident in the country with the biggest potential for Ecoturism...
Welcome!

And the best is yet to come...

BIO TOURS GBS C.A.

BIOTOURS. Hato Piñero

PHONE: 91.6854 - 91.6676 - 91.6965. FAX: 91.6776. Caracas

BioTours is propietor of Hato Piñero. BioTours is the only wholesalers in Ecoturism in Venezuela

BEACHES OF VENEZUELA

NATIONAL PARKS AND MONUMENTS

NATIONAL PARKS AND MONUMENTS

Visitors to Venezuela's 39 national parks should theoretically obtain a free permit from the National Parks Institute (Inparques). However, this rule is generally not enforced since lack of personnel makes implementation almost impossible.

In reality, the only places where the need for a pass is enforced is in El Avila National Park and the Sierra Nevada National Park. Passes for the former can be obtained at Llano Grande park guard station (Tel.: 81.0690), and for the latter at Inparques in Mérida (Tel.: 074 63.1473). Visitors to national parks in Amazonas state also require permits although packages for visiting Canaima National Park include the necessary passes.

Although there are various tour operators promoting trekking up the *tepuys* of the Gran Sabana, this is not legal. Congress passed a law in 1991 making it illegal to climb *tepuys* until a complete environmental impact study is completed.

No firearms or pets are allowed in the parks or at the national monuments.

For information and passes, visit the office of Inparques at: Avda. Francisco. de Miranda, near Parque del Este Metro station, in front of the Pepsi-Cola factory. You may find it necessary to visit the office, since the telephone (Tel.: 285.4360) rarely works. Hours are 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., and 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., weekdays only.

Parks are listed below. Several additional sites have been designated as national parks, but the National Parks Institute has not yet officially delineated their boundaries. The numbers correspond to those on the accompanying map:

NATIONAL PARKS

1) Henri Pittier

This park is about 110 km (66 miles) from Caracas in Aragua and Carabobo states, with access from Maracay.
Facilities: Picnic areas, water, toilets, refreshment stands, scientific research station, swimming access, hiking trails, recreation areas and information office.

2) Sierra Nevada

Venezuela's highest mountains are found in this park, along with the longest cable car in the world, climbing to 4,765 meters (15,724 feet). Located in Mérida and Barinas states, the park is about 670 km (402 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: Picnic areas, water, refreshment stands, toilets, conference hall and hiking trails.

3) Guatopo

Located in Miranda and Guárico states, access to this park some 80 km (48 miles) from Caracas is from Sta. Teresa, Araguita, Altagracia de Orituco.
Facilities: Picnic areas, water, refreshment stands, toilets, nature trails, swimming access, sites of historical interest, hiking trails and recreation areas.

4) El Avila

Located in the Distrito Federal and Miranda states, this is the most accessible park for Caraqueños.
Facilities: Picnic areas, water, refreshment stands, toilets, nature trails, hiking trails, conference hall, library, recreation areas, dormitory and information office.

5) Yurubí

Located in Yaracuy, with entry via San Felipe, this park is about 275 km (165 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: Picnic areas, water, refreshment stands, toilets, swimming access, recreation areas and nature trails.

6) Canaima

This park is home to the Angel Falls, the highest waterfall in the world, and to many other waterfalls and *tepuys*. In Bolívar state, Canaima is about 640 km (384 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: Hotel, swimming access and information office.

7) Yacambú

Venezuela's only volcanic steam vent is found in this park in Lara, about 48 km (29 miles) from Caracas. The entrance is via Sanare.
Facilities: Picnic areas, water, refreshment stands, toilets, nature trails, camping, swimming access, recreation areas and information office. Excellent birdwatching.

8) Cueva de La Quebradada de Toro

One cave contains the night-flying *guácharo*, or oil bird, and the largest known underground river in the country. Located in Falcón state via highway Chirgua Santa Cruz de Bucaral, it is about 535 km (321 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: Picnic areas, water, museum and information office.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

WHITE WATER - Water thunders over Salto Sapo, or Frog Falls, in Canaima National Park, the Gran Sabana.

9) Archipiélago Los Roques
Regarded as having the best beaches in Venezuela, access to this area 180 km (108 miles) north of the country is by plane or boat only.
Facilities: Picnic areas, hotel, swimming access and information office. Excellent for snorkeling and diving.

10) Macarao
Just 30 km (18 miles) from Caracas, this park is located in the Federal district and Miranda state, southwest of El Junquito.
Facilities: Picnic areas, water, refreshment stands, toilets, trails and information office.

11) Mochima
In Sucre and Anzoátegui states, this park is located on the islands off the coast between Puerto La Cruz and Cumaná, about 400 km (240 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: Picnic areas, water, swimming access and information office.

12) Laguna de La Restinga
Access to the island with mangrove-lined lagoon, which is about 475 km (285 miles) from Caracas in Nueva Esparta state, is by ferry or plane.
Facilities: Swimming access, food stands, boat tours and information office.

13) Médanos de Coro
Huge sand dunes are visible by the entrance to the park near Coro, in Falcón state, which is about 460 km (276 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: Refreshment stand

14) Laguna de Tacarigua
Both the lagoon and beaches of the outer banks are visible in this area, in Miranda state, near Río Chico, about 180 km (108 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: Picnic areas, water, swimming access and information office.

15) Cerro El Copey
Located in Nueva Esparta state, this park is about 475 km (285 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

16) Aguaro-Guariquito
Located in Guárico state, this park is accessible via the highway from Las Mercedes, and is about 400 km (240 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: Information office

17) Morrocoy
Known for its beautiful island beaches, snorkeling and diving, Morrocoy consists of a series of islands off the Falcón state coast, and is located about 270 km (162 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: Water, toilets, hotels, hiking trails, camping access, swimming access and information office.

18) El Guácharo
The biggest attraction at this park is the cave, considered one of the most perfect in the world, which shelters the night-flying *guácharo*, or oil bird. Other caves and various waterfalls are also in the park, about 530 km (318 miles) from Caracas, located in Monagas and Sucre states.
Facilities: Picnic areas, water and hiking trails.

19) Terapaima
Located in Lara and Portuguesa states, with access from Cabudare near Barquisimeto, this park is about 370 km (222 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: Picnic areas, water, nature and hiking trails.

20) Jaua Sarisariñama
This park contains three of the most important *tepuys* in the Roraima formation of the Guayana shield, made from rock 1.25 billion to 1.59 billion years old. In Bolívar state, this park is accessible only by air and is about 800 km (480 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

21) Serranía La Neblina
Cerro La Neblina, at 3,014 meters, (9,946 feet) is the highest elevation in South America east of the Andes. Located in Amazonas state, it is about 1,000 km (600 miles) from Caracas, with access only by air.
Facilities: None

Photo. Elizabeth Kline ©

PRETTY IN PINK - Flamingos flaunt their feathers in Cuare Wildlife Reserve, Chichiriviche.

22) Yapacana
The principal feature at this park is the *tepuy* Cerro Yapacana. Located in Amazonas state, the park is 900 km (540 miles) from Caracas and is accessible only by air.
Facilities: None

23) Duida-Marahuaca
Two of the *tepuys* from the Roraima formation of the Guayana shield here, in Amazonas state, approximately 880 km (528 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

24) Peninsula de Paria
This park is located in Sucre state, about 700 km (420 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

25) Perijá
Located in Zulia state, Perijá is about 800 km (480 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

26) El Tamá
Located in Táchira and Apure states, this park is about 850 km (510 miles) from Caracas, with the nearest access from San Cristóbal.
Facilities: None

27) San Esteban
Located in Carabobo state about 210 km (126 miles) from Caracas, the park features a Spanish trail between San Esteban and Bárbula, a colonial bridge and petroglyphs.
Facilities: Swimming access and hiking trails.

28) Sierra de San Luis
With access via the Coro-Barquisimeto highway, this park in Falcón state is about 380 km (228 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

29) Cinaruco-Capanaparo
In Apure state, the nearest town to this park, which is about 600 km (360 miles) from Caracas, is Puerto Ayacucho in Amazonas state.
Facilities: None, except for private camps.

30) Guaramacal
A large number of endemic species can be found in this park in Trujillo state, which is about 85 km (51 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

31) Dinira
Located in Lara, Trujillo and Portuguesa states, this park is about 580 km (348 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

32) Páramos Batallón-La Negra
More than 100 glacial lakes can be found in this park, about 800 km (480 miles) from Caracas, located in Mérida and Táchira states.
Facilities: None

33) Chorro El Indio
Located in Táchira state, access to this park about 840 km (504 miles) from Caracas is San Cristóbal.
Facilities: Swimming access, refreshment stands and toilets.

34) Sierra La Culata
Cloud forests and *páramo* can be seen at this park, some 700 km (420 miles) from Caracas, in Mérida state.
Facilities: None

35) Cerro Saroche
This park, an important xerophytic zone in Lara state, is some 400 km (240 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

36) Turuépano
Flatlands of marine origin, littered with numerous fossil remains, are found in this park in Sucre state, some 600 km (360 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

37) Mariusa
An important fish reserve in the delta of the Orinoco in Delta Amacuro state, this park is about 830 km (498 miles) from Caracas, with access only by water.
Facilities: None

38) Ciénagas del Catatumbo
At this park, a bog empties into the fresh water of Lake Maracaibo, in Zulia state, some 950 km (570 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

39) Parima-Tapirapecó
At 3.42 million hectares (8.55 million acres), this is the largest national park in Venezuela, and the fifth largest in the world. Located in Amazonas state, it is about 1,000 km (600 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

NATURAL MONUMENTS

I) Cueva del Guácharo (Official name: Monumento Alejandro de Humboldt)
Venezuela's largest cave is home to the colonies of night-flying *guácharos* or oil birds, and is located in Monagas state, about 450 km (270 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: Water, toilets, tour guides, snack bar, museum and information office.

CARACAS HILTON
503-5000
Reservaciones:
503-4203
Fax:
503-5003

CARACAS RESIDENCIAS ANAUCO HILTON
Reservaciones:
573-5702
Fax:
573-7724

BARQUISIMETO HILTON
Reservaciones:
(051) 54-29-45
54-32-01
Fax:
(051) 54-43-65

MARGARITA HILTON
(095) 62-41-11
Reservaciones:
(095) 62-11-32
Fax:
(095) 62-08-10

HILTON

Oficina de Reservaciones Maracaibo: (061) 79-5[illegible]-501

EL HILTON • EL HOTEL

II) Morros de San Juan (Official name: Monumento Arístides Rojas)
Located in Guárico state, about 145 km (87 miles) from Caracas, these are sandstone buttes originating from the sea that covered the region 800 million years ago. There are numerous caves.
Facilities: None

III) María Lionza
This is an important site for its cultural aspects as well as ecological ones, since this is the sacred mountain of the popular goddess of nature, María Lionza. Her hundreds of thousands of followers form a nationwide cult, making regular pilgrimages, performing rites of exorcism and communicating with the spirits. Located in Yaracuy state, about 280 km (168 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: Picnic areas, water, refreshment stands, toilets and hiking trails.

IV) Cerro Santa Ana
This hill on the Paraguaná peninsula in Falcón state is about 460 km (276 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: Hiking trails

V) Laguna de las Marites
Natural canals through the mangroves can be visited by boat from El Yaque or La Isleta, all located in Nueva Esparta state, about 475 km (285 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

VI) Las Tetas de Maria Gueyara
These are two hills, shaped like a woman's breasts, which grace the island of Margarita's coastline in Nueva Esparta, some 475 km (285 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

VII) Cerros Matasiete y Guayamurí
These hills are located in Nueva Esparta state, about 475 km (285 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

VIII) Piedra del Cocuy
This site is a 400-meter-high (1,320 feet) igneous rock formation in the extreme south-western corner of Amazonas state, extending from the jungle. It is about 1,000 km (600 miles) from Caracas, with access only by river.
Facilities: None

IX) Cerro Autana
This site is a giant tower projecting from the jungle floor with a spectacular cave near the top, where the newly discovered mineral *sveita* was found. Access to the site, located in Amazonas state about 900 km (540 miles) from Caracas, is only by air .
Facilities: None

X) Morros de Macaira
Sandstone projections with numerous caves are found at this site in Guárico state, about 160 km (96 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

XI) Cueva Alfredo Jahn
The second-largest cave in the country, this has 15 entrances, an underground river and many beautiful chambers. Located in Miranda state, it is about 180 km (108 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

XII) Laguna de Urao
Located in Mérida state, near the town of Lagunillas, this lagoon is about 570 km (342 miles) from Caracas, the site where urea was collected from the lakebed by Indians.
Facilities: Picnic areas, toilets, snack bar and boat rental.

XIII) La Chorrera Las González
This waterfall and swimming hole in Mérida state is about 680 km (408 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: Swimming access

XIV) Platillón
This site is located in Guárico state, about 150 km (90 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

XV) Loma el León
In Lara state, this scenic hillside is located about 500 km (300 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

XVI) Formaciones de Tepuys
These large sandstone structures, about 700 km (490 miles) from Caracas, loom over the flatlands of the Gran Sabana, with the largest formation in Roraima.
Facilities: None

XVII) Pico Codazzi
This is the highest peak in Aragua state with significant endemic flora species, some 150 km (90 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

XVIII) Piedra Tortuga
This lava formation, in the shape of a turtle, has indigenous paintings near its top. Located in Amazonas state, this formation is near Puerto Ayacucho, some 700 km (420 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

XIX) Piedra Pintada
This rock formation, with huge petroglyphs carved on the face of a cliff by indigenous dwellers of past centuries, is located in Amazonas state, near Puerto Ayacucho, and is some 790 km (474 miles) from Caracas.
Facilities: None

DISCOVER THE BEST OF VENEZUELA
Los Roques and La Blanquilla islands
White coral sand beaches surrounded by multicolored water
Angel Falls and the Gran Sabana
The Lost World of the Tepuys and the waterfalls
The secret Caribbean
Spices in Grenada. The Robinson Crusoe caves in Tobago, sensuous beaches
Ask about our daytours and lodging packages
Caracas:
(58-2) 761.6247 / 761.8043 / 71.7375 / 761.5702 Fax: 762.5254
Porlamar:
(58-95) 63.2211 (Master) 63.0367 / 63.0862 / 63.0691 Fax: 63.0620
AEREOTUY

DAY TRIPS FROM CARACAS

COLONIA TOVAR

High in the mountains near Caracas is the German village of Colonia Tovar, complete with traditional German architecture, food and drink.

The colony was founded in 1843, in the aftermath of Venezuela's battle for independence, when a depletion of farmers prompted the country to encourage immigration. A group of hardy immigrants from the Black Forest region of Germany, the colonizers came at the behest of wealthy landowner Martín Tovar, who promised rich farmland and the basics to begin a new life.

Many never survived the journey, as smallpox swept through their ship. Once they arrived, conditions proved to be far more difficult than they were led to believe and promises of help to get them started were not kept. Yet, despite it all, those who founded Colonia Tovar survived the tremendous hardships, eking out a living from the land, building homes in the traditional German manner and maintaining their native language and customs. In the process, they created a village that has become a unique corner of Germany in Venezuela.

Until a few decades ago, the only access was via dirt road by four-wheel drive vehicle; before that, access was via mule, horse or by foot, a factor that kept the community isolated and its economic situation tenuous.

However, with the government's 1964 designation of Colonia Tovar as a site with prime tourism potential, the access roads were paved and the town underwent a dramatic change.

Tourists flooded its streets on the weekends and new shops opened to serve them, featuring handicrafts, homemade jams and jellies and locally grown produce. The number of hotels, also known for their German-style cuisine, increased.

Photo: Mario Corvetto ©

EUROPEAN MAGIC - Colonia Tovar, founded by Germans, is a favorite tourist spot for Venezuelans and foreigners alike.

In the past few years, various special festivals have been introduced to attract additional tourists. A week-long international chamber music festival is held each year, generally in February or March. A Festival of Flowers, Fruits and Crafts is held annually at the end of April. In May of 1993, the Annual Beer Festival made its debut.

Along with shops and produce, Colonia Tovar boasts various architectural highlights. The village church, dating from 1863, has German inscriptions on its bell tower. A handsome school, built in the traditional fashion in 1916, is located next to the church. Facing it is Cafe Muhnstall, also known as the Benitz house, which was built in 1846 to serve as the community house and as the residence for the chief of the colony. To the north, behind a tall hedge, is the Codazzi house, which dates from the 1880s. Down the hill from the school is Hotel Selva Negra, which was the lodging place for visitors in 1936.

On the way out of town toward Hotel Frieburg is one of the last of six original mills, constructed about 1860.

Just 90 minutes west of Caracas, Colonia Tovar can be reached by two routes: via Antímano and El Junquito, and via La Victoria. While the first definitely looks shorter on the map, on weekends traffic on this road is so heavy that vehicles barely move and it can take many frustrating hours to reach "La Colonia," as it is called by most locals.

The quicker route, which is also more scenic, is via La Victoria by freeway, and then by the winding 34-km. climb northwards. The brisk mountain air can get very cold during the night.

Accommodation in Colonia Tovar:
(Tel. area code is 033.)

Hotel Alta Baviera (★★★)
Tel.: 51.333
Services: -
Price range: C

Hotel Bergland (★★)
Tel.: 51.229
Services: -
Price range: C

Hotel Eidelweis (★★)
Tel.: 51.260
Services: 5
Price range: C

Hotel Frieburg (★★)
Tel.: 51.313
Services: 5
Price range: C

Hotel Selva Negra (★★★)
Tel.: 51.415/072
Services: 1,7,9
Price range: B/C

EL HATILLO

The quiet artisan haven of El Hatillo is just four km south of the Caracas city limits. Its physical attractions are many, with narrow streets giving it an intimate atmosphere, numerous well-conserved modest colonial buildings and a handsome church, built in 1784. The village, in its cool hilly setting, has been designated a national historic monument.

As little as three or four years ago, those who had heard through the grapevine about this charming village found a sprinkling of small galleries and shops selling Venezuelan crafts

and the creative products of the local artists, a few boutiques featuring original designs of clothing and decorator items, and two or three tiny eateries - all closing around dusk.

Now, visitors to El Hatillo find that parking spots are rare, commercial establishments fill nearly every building in the compact downtown area, and a number of retaurants and bars are open until well past midnight. The majority of the attractions are found within a radius of three blocks or less from Plaza Bolívar. Many are closed on Mondays.

To reach El Hatillo by car, drivers head via Prados del Este freeway, past La Trinidad and La Boyera. *Por puestos* depart several times daily from just south of the Chacaíto shopping area, two blocks from Chacaíto Metro station.

Because of the one-way streets, the first possible street for entering the downtown section is Calle La Paz. An arrow to the right leads to a cleared dirt area, which serves as a parking lot.

One of the main attractions in El Hatillo is the enormous handicraft shop Hannsi, which stocks traditional native crafts and artisans' works from every corner of the country. Located north of the plaza, it is open from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and from 2:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; from 9:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Saturdays; and from 10:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. on Sundays.

Another highlight of El Hatillo can be found in the plaza, where a pair of three-toed sloths live in the treetops.

The city historian, or "Cronista de El Hatillo," otherwise known as José Félix Pereza González, gives fascinating tours of the town by prior arrangement (Tel.: 963.7419).

The choice of snack and food places in El Hatillo is almost as diverse as the number of artisan shops. There is American-style food available at places such as Houlihan's, pizzas from Pizza Jazz and Venezuelan-style fast food from El Fogón.

Not to be missed is Das Pastelhaus in Calle La Paz, which serves sinfully rich, Austrian-style pastries downstairs and pizza made in a wood-fired oven on its upper terrace. It is open from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m., from Tuesdays to Sundays.

LA VICTORIA

Among the attractions here are two colonial churches. One, dedicated to Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de La Victoria, (c.1800) faces the city's main square, Plaza Ribas, which is one block south of the main avenue. The other is a chapel dedicated to Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria, facing Plaza Bolívar, built at the end of the 18th century.

Another architectural point of interest is the looming, castle-like structure of Cuartel Mariano Montilla, constructed between 1904 and 1937, which is open for visits on weekends.

National Youth Day is celebrated on Feb. 12, with parades and many other activities. This commemorates the date a militia of young boys, along with the aged and infirm who had been left in the city while the regulars were in the midst of battle elsewhere, succeeded in defending La Victoria against the seemingly invincible forces of Tomás Boves during the War of Independence.

An interesting getaway spot on the western outskirts of town is the Hotel El Recreo, now operated by the Club Cotoperix group, a combination of a colonial-period *hacienda* and modern hotel rooms, discreetly set to one side of the garden-like grounds, complete with swimming pool (Tel.: 02.261.8101).

Visitors can also dine at the poolside restaurant of the colonial-era *hacienda*.

SAN MATEO MUSEUMS

Along the Panamerican Highway, between La Victoria and Maracay, on opposite sides of the road, are two museums in buildings that were part of the Simón Bolívar family estate.

The Museo de Caña de Azucar, or Sugar Cane Museum, has been installed in the plantation's former sugar mill, with ancient machinery and implements used to process sugar on display.

The Historic and Military Museum occupies the former *hacienda* of the Bolívar family, on a rise overlooking the farmlands in the valley below.

Hours for both museums are 9:00 a.m. - noon, and from 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., Tuesday to Sunday.

MARACAY

The gateway to the beautiful Henri Pittier National Park in Maracay is located 90 minutes west of Caracas. Founded in 1697, and now serving as the capital of Aragua state, Maracay also was in effect the nation's capital for the 27 years dictator Juan Vicente Gómez led the country, since it was his home. The presence of Gómez is still felt through the numerous structures and sites constructed under his direction, such as the huge park-like Plaza Bolívar, the government palace and Teatro de la Opera.

The city's main attractions are concentrated along Avda. Bolívar, Avda. Las Delicias and Avda. 19 de Abril. Maracay's best restaurants are found along Avda. Las Delicias and include: Churchill Steak House and Piano Bar; Quo Vadis (Italian); El Portón de la Abuela (meats and seafoods); Label's Riacho (restaurant, piano bar and dance area); El Bodegón de Sevilla (Spanish); and Los Toneles Tasca del Valle (Spanish). The principal hotels are also found here.

The Maracay Zoo, which is closed on Mondays, is located at the end of Avda. Las Delicias. The office was formerly General Gómez's country house. His own private menagerie of endemic and exotic species formed the beginning of the zoo's collection.

On Avda. 19 de Abril is the very impressive Moorish-style bullring, La Maestranza, also known as Plaza de Toros César Girón, named in honor of one of the most famous of Maracay's excellent bullfighters.

To the west, the main focal point is Plaza Girardot. Surrounding it is Maracay's colonial cathedral, the Anthropological Museum (with many examples from local digs), the Archeological Museum, and Historical Museum, all of which are closed Mondays.

Five blocks east on Avda. Bolívar is the beautiful, three-block-long Plaza Bolívar. Behind it is the government palace, occupying what was originally the Hotel Jardín, constructed by Gómez in 1924.

Accommodation in Maracay:
(Tel. area code is 043.)

Hotel Byblos Continental (★★★★)
Avda. Las Delicias
Tel.: 41.4212/5111/5344/5555/5977
Services: 1,5,6,7,9
Price range: C

Hotel Italo (★★★★)
6ta. Avda.
Tel.: 22.896-898, 20.195-198
Services: 4,5,6,7,9,12, jacuzzi & laundry
Price range: C

Hotel Pipo Internacional (★★★★)
Avda. Principal El Castaño
Tel.: 41.2022/3111/2722/2977
Services: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,12,14
Price range: B

PUERTO CABELLO

On the Caribbean coast 25 minutes north of Valencia is Puerto Cabello, one of the busiest ports in the nation. The town also boasts a very handsome colonial zone that has recently undergone a complete restoration.

Fort Solano, the last colonial fort built in Venezuela, stands to the west of town, while within Puerto Cabello is the last Spanish stronghold on Venezuelan soil. This is Fortín San Felipe, also known as Castillo El Libertador, which was built in 1732 at the harbor entrance. The fort has undergone various restoration efforts, but visitors can never be sure if it is open without checking at the naval base.

The colonial zone is concentrated around Plaza Bolívar with its unusual old stone church, Iglesia San José, built in 1857 but with a modern bell tower. A dominant architectural feature is the "flying" balconies extending from the second story of many buildings, supported by elaborately-carved wooden brackets. The most outstanding of these is the bright blue one on the Historical Museum, formerly known as the Colonial Arms Museum for its large collection of arms. The same building has an interesting bridge at the back, passing over Calle de los Lanceros. This street, which is used as an open-air gallery by local artists, was named after a group of patriots who launched a surprise attack on the Spanish during the War of Independence, carrying their lances through the mangrove swamps. They were victorious and the Spanish left Venezuela soon after the surrender of the fort.

Other architectural gems are the Iglesia del Rosario, built in 1780, with its wooden bell tower added in the 19th century, and Plaza Monumento El Aguila. This is a tall column topped with the figure of a king condor, honoring the American volunteers who lost their lives fighting with General Francisco de Miranda during Venezuela's War of Independence.

A very good place to eat in this area is Restaurant Venezuela, facing Plaza El Aguila. Another choice is Mar y Sol on Calle El Mercado, considered by some to be Puerto Cabello's best seafood restaurant.

Puerto Cabello also boasts several beaches, including Playa El Huequito and Quizandal, from which shuttle boats cross over to Isla Larga, well-known for snorkeling around the wrecks of two sunken ships, but with no facilities or shade. The beaches of Guacamaicuto and Patanemo are located further round the coast.

EXTENDED TRIPS

MERIDA

The highest and longest cable car in the world, the highest Andean peak in Venezuela and the ice cream shop with the world's largest variety of flavors are all highlights of Mérida.

This charming university capital of the state bearing the same name has a friendly, open atmosphere. Although it is surrounded by the Andean mountains, it is still possible to walk around the city in shorts during the day, but temperatures are cooler at night and in the outlying regions.

For trips up the *teleférico* or cable car, which is one of Mérida's prime attractions, much warmer clothes are needed. Stretching for 12.5 km (7.5 miles), the cable car reaches 4,765 meters (15,724 feet) above sea level, with four stages to the top. The last stage is, however, out of operation. It ends at Pico Espejo Station, where the glaciers of Pico Bolívar, sheer rock walls and snow can be seen on the Cresta de Gallo or "cock's comb." Once at the third station, the cold can be warded off by a mug of hot chocolate and a brisk walk to view the twin lagoons, Los Anteojos, or "eyeglasses."

It is possible to take a much longer walking or mule-ridden excursion from here to the 400-year-old Indian village, Los Nevados. Packages can be arranged through travel agents in both Mérida and Caracas, but serious hikers can make the trip themselves. The four- to five-hour journey can be made easier by hiring a mule at the top of the *teleférico*. Once at Los Nevados, it is easy to find cheap accommodation, since almost every village house accepts tourists overnight for a small fee. A free national parks pass should be obtained from Inparques before going up the *teleférico* (Tel.: 63.1473).

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

GOING UP - Mérida's teleférico, the highest and longest in the world, climbs Pico Bolívar in the Andes.

Posted hours for riding the cable car are 7:30 a.m. - noon (return trips continue until much later) Wednesday to Sunday, but there is no set schedule for runs, since cars do not ascend unless there are at least 25 people. Early trips are better, since clouds rolls down off the mountain in the afternoon, obscuring the breathtaking view. During heavy vacation time, runs up are from 7:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m., Tuesday to Sunday. Tickets are Bs.400 ($4.40) for adults, Bs.200 ($2.20) for students, and Bs.100 ($1.10) for children.

Back in town, another of Mérida's record-breaking attractions is located by Plaza Rangel Del Llano at Avda. 2 and the corner of Calle 29. It is Helados Coromoto, an ice cream shop listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as offering the most ice cream flavors (at last count over 534) in the world. Caviar, garlic, sardines and brandy, spaghetti and chicken, and beer are among the many varieties, which all do actually taste like ice cream.

Other highlights in Mérida include Parque Beethoven, which has two clocks, one made from flowers, and one from wooden soldiers. The Modern Art Museum is just across the street. At the end of Avda. Chorros de Milla is a large park of the same name, which houses a zoo.

Most restaurants in the northern section are found along Avda. Los Chorros de Milla. Among the most recommended are: Tejados de Chachopo (Criollo); Fonda de Tía Milla (beef, continental); Restaurant Chino (Chinese); and Restaurant La Terraza (international) at Hotel La Terraza.

The cathedral is located in the peaceful, green Plaza Bolívar. It took 150 years to build because of earthquake and war damage, and consequently it has a mixture of architectural styles.

Near the plaza are two more eateries frequented by locals: Restaurant Marisquería Vargas and Restaurant El Gran Balcón. Restaurants in the southern part of the city include: Il Duce (Italian, international) in Avda. Las Américas in C.C. Mayeya; Casa Vieja (meats) in Avda. Los Próceres by the cemetery; The Candiles (international and seafood) and Via Ejido on Avda. Andrés Bello.

The area surrounding Mérida city is best visited by car, although side trips can be arranged by hiring a taxi or taking a bus to the most accessible places. Cars can be hired from the airport for reasonable rates. One of the most popular destinations is Jají, a restored colonial village 40 km (24 miles) from Mérida. The destination is beautiful, and tourists flock to see the old houses and craft shops grouped around the plaza, but after night falls, peace reigns again. It is possible to stay here but accommodation is generally much more comfortable in Mérida.

Another excursion is to the Black Lagoon (La Laguna Negra), high up in the mountains, where horses can be taken on the hour's trip from the park entrance to the forbidding waters of the lagoon. Just a bit further in San Rafael de Mucuchíes is a chapel constructed stone by stone by a local artist and finished in 1984 when he was 83 years old.

Accommodation in Mérida
(Tel. area code is 074.)

Hotel Belensate (★★★)
La Hacienda
Avda. Principal
Tel.: 69.1150/1966
Fax: 69.1659
Services: 4,5,7,13, cabins available
Price range: B/C

Hotel Caribay (★★★)
Prolongación Avda. 2 Lora
Tel.: 63.7431/6451
Fax: 63.7141
Services: 2,4,5,7,8, cabins available
Price range: B/C

Hotel Chama (★★★)
Edif. San Francisco
Avda. 4
Tel.: 52.4851/1011
Services: 2,3,5,7,8
Price range: B/C

Hotel Karibek La Terraza (★★★)
Avda. Chorros de Milla
Tel.: 44.1133/1153 or in Caracas at (02) 762.9961
Fax: 44.8237
Services: 5,7,8
Price range: B/C

Hotel Park (★★★★)
Calle 37 y Avda. Urdaneta
En frente Parque Glorias Patrias
Tel.: 63.2400/7601/4866
Fax: 63.4582
Services: 2,3,4,5,7,8
Price range: B/C

Hotel Pedregosa (★★★★)
Carretera Panamericana
Urb. Pedregosa Norte
Tel.: 66.4295/3457
(02) 261.4547 (Caracas)
Fax: 66.3181
Services: 5,7,8,9,11
Price range: B/C

Hotel Residencias Agua Blanca
Urb. Alto Chama
Calle Las Peñas
La Parroquia
Tel.: 71.0846/2536
Fax: 63.5972
Services: 13, bilingual guides
Price range: C

Hotel Tisure (★★★★)
Avda. 4, Entre Calle 17 y 18
Tel.: 52.0744/1744/1961
Fax: 53.0827
Services: 5,6,7, suites have jacuzzi
Price range: B/C

Posada La Merideña
Avda. 3
Tel.: 52.5738
Services: -
Price range: D

Posada Luz Caraballo
Avda. 2, Entre Calle 13 y 14
Tel.: 52.5441
Services: -
Price range: D

CORO AND THE PARAGUANA PENINSULA

Sand dunes shifting silently in the sun near one of Venezuela's oldest colonial towns characterize this area of Falcón state. Coro means "wind" in the Indian language Arawak, and the name is well suited to the windswept area. Dunes constantly shift along a 28-km (16.8 miles) stretch of coastline, which is excellent for working on a suntan but not good for swimming due to the wind-whipped waves.

More goats than people are said to inhabit the Paraguaná Península, and products made from goat's milk, cheese and meat are common. Goat's milk fudge or *dulce de leche coriano*, as well as goat in coconut sauce or *chivo en coco*, are local specialties. Cacti and salt beds predominate on the northern tip of the peninsula, a favorite habitat for pelicans.

On the northeast coast, beaches are quite calm and are covered with fine sand. For eating on this side, Marisquería Cervecería San Ramón is rustic but has good, fresh seafood. The lobster is exceptional.

The best beaches, however, are found on the west coast, north of Punto Fijo between Villa

Marina and El Pico. The last has changing facilities and a very basic but inexpensive restaurant.

The capital of Falcón state, Coro, is located about five hours driving time from Caracas. Established by Juan de Ampies in 1527, it is one of the oldest cities in South America and has one of the most outstanding concentrations of excellent colonial architecture. In recognition of the importance of the treasures that exist there, the heart of the colonial zone of the city has been declared a national monument.

In its early days, Coro was one of Venezuela's most important locations, serving as capital of the Province of Venezuela. In 1531, it was named the first Episcopal See in the New World, and it was the site of the nation's first cathedral.

During the 18th century, contraband trade flourished between merchants in Coro and those of the Caribbean islands of Dutch-colonized Curaçao and Bonaire, which influenced the architecture of Coro. Buildings with this influence are located along Calle Zamora near Plaza San Clemente. Housed in a protective cage in the plaza is a cross reportedly made from the tree under which Ampies, the founder of Coro, and Indian chief Manaure sat the day the city was founded. Beside it is the Chapel of San Clemente, which dates from the mid-1700s.

Facing the plaza is Coro's Cathedral, which was constructed in 1583 and is one of the oldest churches in Venezuela. The cathedral tower still has gun slits, a reminder that it often served as a fort to defend the city against pirate attacks.

On the next corner is the building known as The Balcony of the Arcayas, earning its name both for the family who occupied it from the 1700s until this century, and for its distinctive second-story balcony. It now functions as a museum for ceramics collected by noted archeologist J.M. Cruxent. It is closed Monday, but is open 9:00 a.m. - noon Tuesdays; from

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

BEACH FOR BILLY GOATS - The beaches on the Paraguana peninsula are frequented more by goats than by people.

4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Wednesday through Friday; from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Saturday; and from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Sunday.

Next door is The House of the Iron Windows. The name refers to its fame for its iron-grilled windows imported from Spain, a rarity when it was built in the last part of the 18th century. With iron grills now common, what is more likely to catch the visitor's eye is the distinctive baroque doorway.

One building on the next corner is known as The Bishop's House, or Treasure House. Its second name comes from the legend that a great treasure hoard was hidden in tunnels under it.

Across from Plaza San Clemente, on Calle Federación is The House of the Sun, so named for the sun face above the door.

Accommodation in Coro and peninsula area:
(Tel. area code is 068.)

Hotel Cardón (★★★)
Maraven complejo en Cardón
Tel.: 54.655 and through Maraven switchboard at 74.795/095
Services: 1,5,7,9
Price range: C

Hotel Luigi (★★★)
Judibana
Tel.: 51.386 and through Lagoven switchboard at 40.7872
Services: -
Price range: C

Hotel Península (★★★)
Al lado de Hogar Hispano
Punto Fijo
Tel.: 45.9734/9843/9776
Services: 1,5,7,9,14
Price range: B/C

Hotel Venecia (★★★)
Avda. Manaure
Services: -
Price range: C

Médanos Caribe
Las Cumaraguas
Tel.: (02): 34.4117/4034/8263 (Caracas)
51.4503, 52.1890 (Coro)
Services: -
Price range: B

THE LLANOS

Stretching across the center of Venezuela, the *llanos*, or plains, may be short on human population, but the area is one of the country's hottest spots in terms of quantity and variety of fauna.

Geographically, the *llanos* cover a tremendous amount of the nation, from southern Anzoátegui state in the east; to the base of the Andes in the west; to southern Guárico, Cojedes, and Portuguesa states to the north; and as far south as the Orinoco and Meta River. However, the image in most people's minds of the "real *llanos*" are the wide open spaces of Apure state and the huge *hatos* or cattle ranches, complete with their own version of cowboys.

The area is flooded with rains during the wet season and can almost resemble a desert during the dry season. Home to the world's largest rodent, the *chiguire*, it is also full of crocodiles, jaguars and an enormous variety of birdlife. The *llanos* was also the setting for one of Venezuela's most renowned novels, Doña Barbara, by Rómulo Gallegos.

Within the past few years, the great interest displayed in the *llanos*' ecological attractions has awakened owners of the *hatos* and other entrepreneurs to the region's vast tourism potential. The result has been the opening of a number of facilities for tourists right on working ranches. Prices range from about $50 to $120 (Bs.4,550 to Bs.10,800) per day, and include accommodation, food, drink and daily guided tours. It is also possible to take horseback rides through the plains.

Normally, more wildlife can be seen by staying at one of the *hatos*. One exception is along Highway 4, south from La Ye (near Mantecal branching off the east-west Highway 19) to Elorza, which borders Hato El Cedral.

For those going it alone, Centro Turístico Hostería El Gabón, near Puerto Nutrias, Barinas state, has facilities with swimming pool and horseback riding, priced at Bs.1,600 ($12.58) single, double, or matrimonial (Tel.: 073.26.183; fax: 051.51.9633). The best time to go is in the dry season, with four-wheel drives needed for anything off the main highways during the rainy season.

Flights are available to San Fernando, with *hatos* in Apure all offering optional transfers from the airport.

Accommodation in Apure area:
Available through the following numbers in Caracas, code (02).

El Frío Biological Station (through Organizacion Epsilon Viajes y Turismo)
Tel.: 34.8544, 016.22.7714
Fax: 34.6714
Services: -
Cost: B

Hato Doña Bárbara (through Lost World Adventures de Venezuela)
Tel.: 71.8641
Fax: 71.7859
Services: -
Price Range: B/C for Venezuelans; B for foreigners

Hato El Cedral (through Fit Tours)
Tel.: 563.7244, 564.7443
Fax: 562.7432
Services: -
Price range: B/C for Venezuelans; C/D for foreigners

Los Indios Adventure Camp
Tel.: 781.6945, 782.1546/4831
Fax: 781.7421
Services: -
Price range: A/B

Accommodation outside Apure state:
Hacienda Turística Chinea Arriba Dude Ranch
Cerca de Calabozo
Guaríco state
Tel.: 781.4595/4241
Fax: 793.2191
Services: -
Price range: B/C

Hato El Piñero
Cerca de El Baúl
Cojedes state
Tel.: 91.6965/6854/6676
Fax: 91.6776
Services: -
Price range: B/C

GUAYANAS REGION

AMAZONAS STATE

This is the land of the vast, strange jungle, where jaguar lurk and monkeys play amid a myriad of exotic plants. Amazonas is so vast and seemingly impenetrable that it was not until 1953 that the highest peak of the Sierra de La Neblina range, which skirts the southern edge of the territory, was discovered.

Because of the difficulties of getting around in this area, Puerto Ayacucho is generally used as a base. Since it is a relatively new town, founded in 1924, it lacks historic sites.

The town offers three principal attractions: "Tarzan's House," the ethnological museum, and the weekly Indian handicraft market.

The first is a very standard ranch-style house constructed by a rather eccentric individual to balance atop a mammoth boulder, touching only in the center of the building's base, and reachable by a long metal staircase. The original designer and owner died several years ago, with no heirs, so the state now owns the house.

The ethnological museum has five extensive exhibits dedicated to the state's major indigenous groups, and should not be missed (Tel. 048.22.842). It is open from 8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. and from 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m., Tuesday to Friday; from 9:00 a.m. - noon and 3:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Saturday; and from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Sunday.

Artistic crafts such as small animals carved from balsa wood and baskets made by the Guajibo and Piaroa Indians are sold at the weekly Saturday market.

Among standard inclusions for jeep excursions outside of town is the Tobogán de la Selva, a 20-meter (66 feet) natural rock slide in one of the jungle rivers. Also usually included are visits to the largest known collection of petrogylphs in Venezuela, which include a drawing

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

AMAZONAS ACCOMMODATIONS - The jungle in Amazonas state is home to several indigenous tribes.

of a 50-meter snake (165 feet), and to a nearby dolmen called Turtle Rock. This is a formation of a turtle-shaped ancient stone called *laja*, which sports cave paintings by local indigenous tribes.

Boat trips by motor-powered dugout canoe to the more remote indigenous villages are usually optional, as is rafting in the rapids of the Orinoco. This is best when the river is highest around June and can be arranged independently through Jorge Buzzo's Expediciones Aguas Bravas. (Tel. in Caracas: 02.284.7735).

Costs of excursions into the lower parts of the state are considerably more expensive, since one needs a chartered plane and special permits. With the lack of facilities, expeditions to the southern extremes will normally involve camping or innovative solutions, such as those offered by Alechiven, operated by Edith Rogge (Tel.: 041.21.1828/2660, Fax: 21.7018).

After a private flight to San Carlos de Río Negro, her clients mount the "Alexander von Humboldt," a 22-meter (72 feet), motor-powered wooden boat that has cooking facilities, primitive shower and toilet, and thatched roof whose support poles double as places to string hammocks for sleeping. In this travel/hotel craft, she offers several different trips, including one that goes south along the Río Negro to the border of Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela; and another along rivers heading east into the heart of the southern territory.

Most major travel agencies offer different options to this area, or can arrange them through independent operators.

Accomodation in Puerto Ayacucho:

Gran Hotel Amazonas
Tel.: (048) 21.495
Services: -
Price Range: C/D

CIUDAD BOLIVAR

History permeates the city near the Orinoco River in Ciudad Bolívar. Named after Simón Bolívar, the acclaimed liberator of South America, the city was once his headquarters and the scene of the country's first Congress. The nation's first newspaper was also produced in Ciudad Bolívar, and the world-famous Angostura bitters were invented here.

From its foundation in 1764 until the mid-1950s, this city was considered the most important port on the Orinoco River and the link between the *llanos* and all of Guayana with the rest of Venezuela, Colombia and directly to the Atlantic Ocean and Europe. Today, its main importance is as the state's capital and financial center and as the center of the nation's diamond and gold trade. It is just eight hours from Caracas, with good roads and a regular bus service.

The river is still a focus of activity, with shops and some of the budget hotels located on Paseo Orinoco. A viewpoint provides a good area to see the Angostura Bridge, the first bridge to span the Orinoco, and jumping freshwater dolphins are a common site in the river.

The city's bustling downtown area starts from this point, and several historical buildings can be found along the riverside. The Museo de Ciudad Bolívar is located in the building that was the first home of the newspaper El Correo del Orinoco, which Bolívar started in 1818 in English and Spanish to keep his British troops up to date with his policy. The museum features a large art collection and is open 9:00 a.m. - noon and 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday; and 9:00 a.m. - noon on Sunday.

Several blocks away near Plaza Bolívar is the cathedral, which took from 1771 to 1840 to be built. One of the most famous sites is the Casa del Congreso de Angostura, where Bolívar delivered his impassioned speech in 1819, the Discurso de Angostura, calling for the formation of Gran Colombia. The next day, he was elected president of the republic, and later the first Constitution was approved. Bolívar's dream of a united South America is portrayed by the statues in the square representing the five countries he liberated - Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú and Bolívia. The Congress building now serves as a museum, and is open from 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. daily, except Thursdays.

Other highlights of the city include Casa de San Isidro, on Avda. Táchira at Calle 5 de Julio, a short distance south of the historic zone. Simón Bolívar lived here from 1818-1819, when the city was the provisional capital of the country, and where he wrote his famous Discurso de Angostura. The house has been meticulously restored as a museum with colonial period furnishings and is open from 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., from 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily, except Wednesdays.

The Museo de Arte Moderno Jesús Soto, named for the internationally famous native artist, is on Avda. Germania, east of Centro. It is open 9:00 a.m - noon and from 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. during the week, except Tuesdays; and 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. weekends and holidays.

One of the best places to eat is Rancho de Said Morales, a huge open-sided place featuring charcoal-grilled and spit-roasted beef, reasonable prices and live *música criolla* on weekends. It is on the highway toward Ciudad Guayana.

Accommodation in Ciudad Bolívar:
(Tel. area code is 085.)

Laja City Hotel (★★★)
Avda. Táchira y Avda. Bolívar
Tel.: 29.910/919/920
Services: 7,9,14, plus use of facilities at the Laja Real
Price range: C

Hotel Laja Real (★★★★)
En frente del aeropuerto
Tel.: 27.944/955/911
(02) 782.0045 (Caracas)
Fax: 28.778
Services: 4,5,7,8,9,14
Price range: B/C

Hotel Río Orinoco (★★★★)
Tel.: 42.011
Fax: 42.844
Service: 2,4,5,7,9
Price range: B/C

CIUDAD GUYANA

The Spanish conquistadors failed to find the fabled gold reserves of El Dorado, but modern-day Guyana is now known to be rich in minerals such as iron ore, aluminum, magnesium, gold and diamonds. It is also the country's major source of hydroelectric power.

Most of the industry is concentrated near Ciudad Guyana, from which two free guided tours can be taken. The nation's steel-making company, Sidor, or Siderúgica del Orinoco, C.A., offers tours Monday through Friday at 10:00 a.m. and at 1:30 p.m. or by prior arrangement with the public relations department (Tel.: 086.90.1750/1165/1495, fax.

99.2186). The company is part of the state-owned conglomerate, Corporación Venezolana de Guayana (CVG).

One of the world's largest aluminum producers, Venalum, or Industria Venezolana de Aluminio, C.A., also offers tours Monday through Thursday, from 7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., and from 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. during school vacation periods, or by prior arrangement (Tel.: 086.22.7164).

The hydroelectric plant of Guri Dam, which harnesses the power of the Caroní River and provides the electricity for the industry of Guayana as well as for most of the central region of the country, has the highest current generating capacity in the world, at 10,000 megawatts, with the latest addition to boost that to 12,600 megawatts.

Located about an hour's drive south of Ciudad Guayana, the route to the dam is well marked from the Ciudad Bolívar-Ciudad Guayana highway. Free guided tours are offered daily except Monday (from 9:00 a.m. -11:00 a.m. and from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday; 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Sundays and holidays).

The city of Ciudad Guayana is composed of the former Puerto Ordaz (a planned city created in 1952) and the old workers' town of San Félix (founded in 1576). They were officially joined by governmental decree in 1961 and renamed Ciudad Guayana, but nearly everyone refers to the two very distinct parts by their old names.

Neither has much to offer in the way of tourist attractions, but there are interesting sites in the vicinity, and they do serve as a starting point for trips to the Gran Sabana.

On the road south toward El Pao is the Salto La Llovizna, which can be viewed from the beautiful setting of a manicured park filled with trees, flowers and crossed by many narrow streams. It is open daily from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Nearby is the Caroní mission church, started at the end of the 18th century by Spanish Capuchin monks. The ruins have been restored and the church is unlike any other in Venezuela, with its interior completely free of pillars or other architectual interruption.

About 40 km (24 miles) east of San Félix are Los Castillos de Guayana la Vieja, a pair of restored colonial forts erected by the Spaniards at a narrow point on the Orinoco River to protect against the constant raids of pirates on Ciudad Bolívar. They are open daily.

The principal in-town site is Parque Cachamay, along the Caroní River via Avda. Guayana at the southeast edge of Puerto Ordaz. The sprawling, tree-filled park (open daily from 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.) faces the impressive Cachamay Falls.

The city's best lodging choice, the five-star Hotel Inter-Continental Guayana, is located adjacent to the park, on a bluff overlooking the Caroní River and falls. Many restaurants are in the Civic Center area. Ercole, a private club, is considered to be the best in the city. Reservations can usually be made at the guest relations desk of the Inter-Continental Hotel. Less expensive, informal meals are served at Pizzería El Churrasco at Calle El Callao and Upata.

Accommodation in Ciudad Guayana (Puerto Ordaz):
(Tel. area code is 086.)

Emperador Hotel Suites (★★★)
Calle La Urbana
Tel.: 22.5511/6641/5765
Fax: 22.6123
Services: 7
Price range: C

Hotel Inter-Continental Guayana (★★★★★)
Parque Punta Vista
Tel.: 22.2244/2235
(02) 92.4522 (Caracas)
Services: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,11
Price range: A

Hotel Rasil (★★★)
Centro Civico
Tel.: 22.2588/3405/9306
Services: 4,5,7,9
Price range: C

THE GRAN SABANA

Venezuela's largest plateau, the Gran Sabana, is carpeted with green grasses and the occasional thicket of palm trees. The flat, open landscape is interspersed with the ancient, flat-topped mountains, known as *tepuys*, the sandstone remnants of ancient rock estimated to be at least 1.8 billion years old.

The *tepuys*, which take their name from the local Pemón Indian word for mountains, are legally off limits to hikers until environmental studies have been completed. The highest formation is Mount Roraima, which has a summit surface area of 75 sq. km (45 miles) covered with plant life and was the inspiration for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's novel, "Lost World."

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

SEEING RED - Colorful rocks are highlighted by the water at Jaspar Creek, the Gran Sabana.

Rivers formed on the *tepuys'* summits spill over, creating spectacular, multi-tiered waterfalls and peaceful pools surrounded by lush tropical foliage. One, called Jaspar Creek, is famous for its colors. The Gran Sabana harbors wildlife, tropical flora, and rock formations unique to the area with some extremely rare species.

The area is also mineral rich, and towns such as Santa Elena de Uairen are peopled mainly by gold and diamond miners. Both minerals are inexpensive throughout this region.

Most visitors take organized tours for a minimum of five days due to the difficulty of arranging solo transport and accommodation. Travel agents offer various all-inclusive options, usually costing between $50 and $100 (Bs.4,550 and Bs.9,100) a day. While most offer similar tours, an alternative is to stay at Camp Kawaik and take day trips from there. This camp costs $95 (Bs.8,645) per night, excluding airfare and transfer to the camp.

However, it is possible to make the trip by car, since the paving of Highway 10 from Ciudad Guayana to Santa Elena de Uairen, the last town before the

Brazilian border. Four-wheel drives allow greater freedom to explore the area. Free permits from the national parks department, Inparques, are required for drivers, and it is advisable to travel in convoy. A map published by CVG with main points of interest and distances can also be obtained.

If not camping, hammocks can be slung in one of the Indian villages along the way. Another option is to stay at one of the rustic offerings, such as Refugio Turístico Chivatón on the route toward Kavanayén. There is no phone and no food is for sale. The next possibility for more traditional lodging is in Santa Elena de Uairen, almost at the frontier of Brazil.

Accommodation in Santa Elena:

Hotel Las Fronteras
Tel.: None
Services: -
Price Range: E

Villa Fairmont
Tel.: (02) 781.7302/7091/7920 (Caracas)
Services: -
Price range: D/E

Hotel Lucrecia
Tel.: (085) 49.689/011) (Happy Tours, Ciudad Guayana)
Services: -
Price range: E

CANAIMA - THE ANGEL FALLS

Water flows down a startling 964 meters (3,212 feet) at Angel Falls, making this narrow strip of water the highest waterfall in the world. Discovered by Jimmy Angel in 1936, the falls are a tourist lure to the already spectacular Canaima National Park, with its dense rain forest and peaceful lagoons.

Unless on an expedition hiking and boating through the jungle, the only access to Canaima and Kavac is by plane. Both day tours and overnight stays are available, though none are cheap. If weather permits, flights to Canaima usually include a fly-over of Angel Falls.

Avensa runs Canaima Camp, at the edge of the lagoon at the base of Salto Hacha (Hacha Falls). Preference for passengers on flights is given to those staying overnight at the camp, who receive considerably cheaper flights. Packages include lodging in very basic rooms, or the expensive hotel, meals and a boat ride in the lagoon. All other excursions are optional.

One popular trip is a four-day, three-night journey by boat to the Angel Falls, run by the Jiménez brothers with Excursiones Canaima. This costs about Bs.18,000 ($197.80) but includes transfers from Canaima, lodging and meals. The trip can only be taken between May and October when the rains make river navigation possible.

For more than three decades, "Jungle Rudy" has operated the other option there - Ucaima Camp, upriver from Hacha Falls. He offers a four-day trip to the base of the Angel Falls in an outboard launch, as well as a number of other excursions, though this is considerably more expensive. A two-night, three-day stay at Jungle Rudy's costs Bs.25,000 ($274.73) based on double occupancy, and includes an excursion to Salto Sapo (Tel.: 02.661.9153, fax: 661.1980).

A more recently opened camp for day visits as well as overnight stays has opened at Kavac, with Auyán *tepuy* in the background. This is offered by Aerotuy. Kavac is a must for

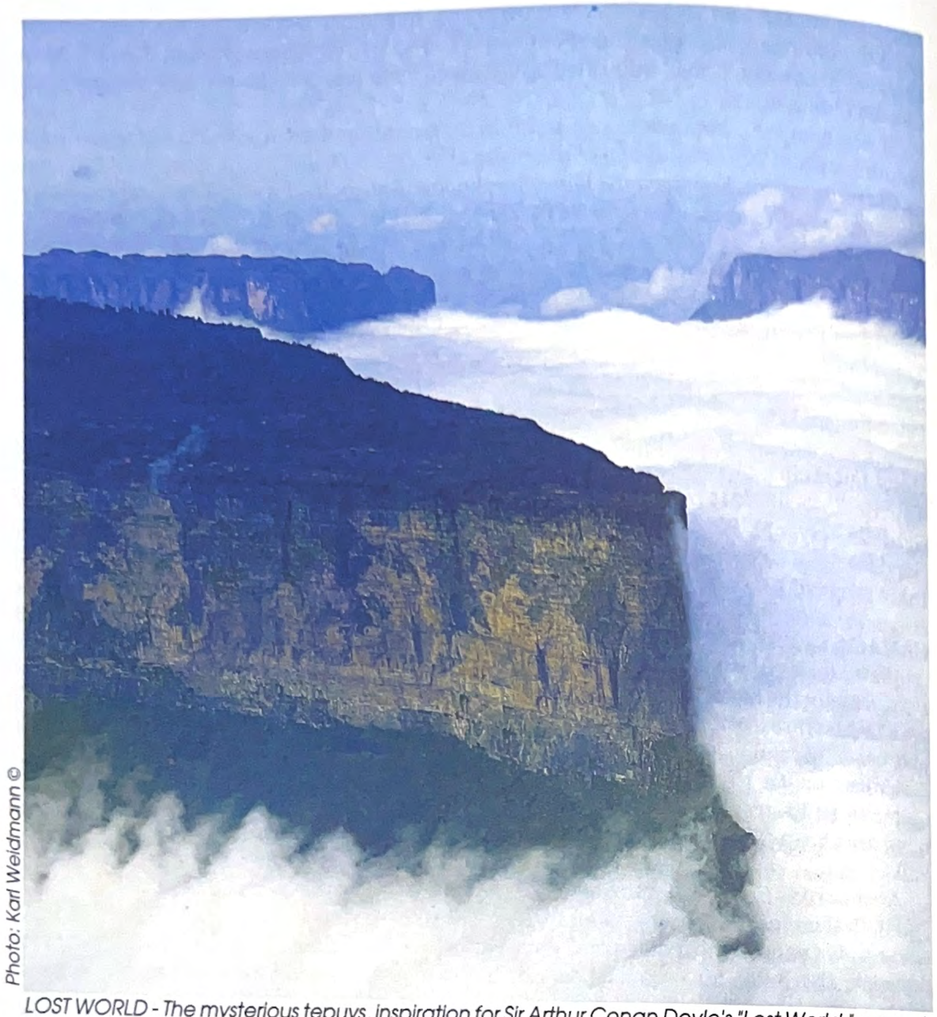


Photo: Karl Weidmann ©

LOST WORLD - The mysterious tepuys, inspiration for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "Lost World," support unique lifeforms.

anyone in this area. Visitors see a series of three waterfalls, the last reached only by swimming through a 50-meter (165 feet) narrow canyon. Day tours to Kavac cost about Bs.11,000 ($120.88), available through most travel agents.

DELTA AMACURO

The delta of the Orinoco River has been one of the most recent regions to be promoted as an adventure/ecotourism destination. Access to its 40,200 square km, (24,120 miles) inhabited predominantly by Warao Indians, is limited to boat travel except for the several roads extending only a few kilometers from the capital of Tucupita.

Several operators offer day tours by boat from Tucupita or Río Morichal in neighboring Monagas state, but as of mid-May 1993 the only facility being offered in the interior of the Delta as a full package was by Alpi Tours in Caracas (Tel.: 02.285.4116/5116). This trip allows visitors to live in a jungle setting and to see the Waroa Indians for about $110 (Bs.10,010) per day.

MARGARITA

With a name derived from the Greek for "pearl," it is hardly surprising that many Venezuelans consider this island a prize jewel. Though the huge pearls for which the island was named have long since disappeared, Margarita's value today is in its duty-free shopping as well as its lovely, pristine coastline.

The largest of the three islands comprising Nueva Esparta state, Margarita has long been a popular destination for national tourists, and was the first place in Venezuela promoted to the mass market with charter flights at bargain rates. With the great influx of both local and foreign tourists over the past decade, the number of hotels and shops, restaurants and beach resorts have grown tremendously. Great improvements have been made to the access roads from the airport and ferry terminals, garbage has been kept in check, and the problem of critical water shortages has been tackled.

The capital, Porlamar, short for Puerto de la Mar, is still the top destination, with the majority of hotels and bargain shopping along Avda. Santiago Mariño and 4 de Mayo. However, for those less interested in shopping and more interested in relaxation, hitting the beaches in Pampatar or Playa El Agua and Juangriego are more favored.

Ferries from both Puerto La Cruz and Cumaná make it possible for visitors to take their cars. But even with the advanced reservation system that now exists, doing so still involves waiting in long lines, particularly during the Christmas shopping season and during Holy Week.

Conferry offers a ferry connection between Puerto La Cruz or Cumaná and Punta Piedras (the terminal site on Margarita) and shuttle service between Punta Piedras and the island of Coche, also part of Nueva Esparta state. Complete information about current schedule and prices is available in Caracas at (02) 782.8544, 781.6688/9714; in Cumaná at (093) 66.1903; in Puerto La Cruz at (081) 66.8767/0389; and in Porlamar at (095) 61.9236/6780.

Turismo Margarita Ferry Service offers a Puerto La Cruz-Margarita ferry connection, as well as a combination express bus from Nuevo Circo and ferry package. Reservations and information are available in Puerto La Cruz at (081) 24.126/127/084 and in Caracas at (02) 571.4479, 762.8826/7263.

However, the most popular means of transportation for Porlamar is by air, although long lines and delays are still common during peak periods at year end, Carnival and Easter. Fortunately, because of the popularity of Margarita as a tourist destination, competition is fierce among hotels, and special packages are constantly being offered. Specials are particularly common during the periods from May 1 to July 31 and from Sept. 16 to Dec. 15.

The small size of the island makes exploring easy. There is a very inexpensive *por puesto* service, generally leaving from the area around the Plaza Bolívar. However, on weekends, especially Sundays, service is drastically reduced and it is sometimes better to negotiate with a taxi driver for a day's hire.

Among the features outside Porlamar are the many colonial churches in the villages of Paraguaché, La Asunción (the oldest in Venezuela, dated 1570), Sta. Ana and Pampatar. The church of Los Robles, also known as El Pilar, contains a solid gold statue of the Virgin of Pilar,

sent to Margarita in 1504 by Spanish Queen Joanna the Mad. Forts can be visited in La Asunción and Pampatar.

El Valle del Espíritu Santo is one of the most-visited places on the island, apart from Porlamar, because it is the residence of La Virgen del Valle, the patron saint of the *Oriente* or eastern part of Venezuela. On and around her Sept. 8 feast day, thousands of devotees make a pilgrimage from all over Venezuela to visit the Virgin.

Playa El Agua, along the eastern shore, is easily the most popular and beautiful of the island's beaches. It is also lined with dozens of very good casual seafood eateries, though most close at 6:00 p.m. Juangriego, along the northwest coast of the eastern section of the island, is also a free port and is renowned for its spectacular sunsets. Small nearby villages are famed for their handicrafts, including pottery, straw bags, gold and silverwork and hand-rolled cigars.

At La Restinga Lagoon National Park, the "neck" between the two sections of the island, boat rides through the myriad channels in the mangroves can be taken as well as to the spectacular beach along its outer banks. Here, too, can be see the Tetas de Maria Guevara ("Maria Guevara's breasts"), two curved mountain peaks. There are two stories about the woman whose name was given to the mountains. One is that she was a local madam, the other a joking reference to a small-chested, 19th-century independence-movement heroine.

The restaurants of Margarita are varied. Some of the expensive options include Bahia (French and Italian) on Blvd. Raúl Leoni; El Chalet (Caribbean food, Swiss fondues) near the airport; and Kalu (French, Italian) at Calle Marcano near Santiago Mariño.

More casual options include Brandy's (pub-style bar with sandwiches) at Calle Cedeño at Malavé; Cheers (American-style steaks) at Avda. Santiago Mariño at Tubores; Da Mikele (Italian) at Calle Raúl Leoni near El Morro; El Chalón de la Karamanduca (Peruvian) at Calle Fermín at Malavé; El Peñero (seafood, pasta, pizza) at Avda. Raúl Leoni; the Flamingo (international and Margarita dishes) at Avda. 4 de Mayo at Santiago Mariño; and Jardín de Italo (Italian, French) at the end of Calle Campos.

Several other non-expensive options include La Atarraya de las Quince Letras (local Margarita dishes) at the corner of Calle San Rafael at Charaima; Martin Pescador (Italian, seafood) at Avda. 4 de Mayo and the Mosquito Coast Bar and Grill (Mexican, American-style BBQ) at Paseo Guaranguao, behind Margarita Plaza.

Accommodation in Margarita (in Porlamar unless otherwise indicated):
(Tel. area code is 095.)

Aparthotel Villa El Griego (★★★★)
Calle Pica Quinta
Juangriego
Tel.: 54.507/382/475/453
(02) 561.9681/4521 (Caracas)
Fax: 55.258
Services: 1,5,7,9,10,11
Price range: B

Hotel Bella Vista (★★★★)
Avda. Santiago Mariño y Calle Igualdad
Tel.: 61.4157/8264/4831/4844
Fax: 61.2557
Services: 1,2,4,5,6,8,9,10
Price range: B/C

Hotel Flamingo Beach (★★★★★)
Calle El Cristo
Sector La Caranta
Pampatar
Tel.: 62.4822/4594/5155
(02) 781.8591 (Caracas)
Fax: 62.2672
Services: 1,2,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,14
Price range: A

Hotel Hippocampus Beach (★★★★)
Pampatar, Sector La Caranta
Tel.: 62.3911/5155
Fax: 61.1801
Services: 4,9,10
Price range: B

Hotel La Perla (★★★★)
Calle Los Pinos
Entre Avda. 4
de Mayo y Rómulo Betancourt
Tel.: 61.1757/0154/0142/6066
(02) 793.2453 (Caracas)
Fax: 61.0066
Services: 1,2,4,5,7,9,10
Price range: B/C

Hotel Stauffer Margarita (★★★★)
Avda. Santiago Mariño y 4 de Mayo
Tel.: 61.3622/2554/3443
Fax: 61.8708
Services: 1,2,4,5,7,9
Price range: B/C

Lagunamar (★★★★★)
Via Playa Guacuco
Pampatar
Tel.: 62.0711/6711
Services: 1,2,4,5,6,7,9,10,11,14
Price range: A

Margabella Suites (★★★★★)
Final de Avda. Santiago Mariño
Tel.: 61.9246
(02) 32.1385/6993 (Caracas)
Fax: 33.6864
Services: 1,5,7,9,12,13
Price range: A

Margarita International Resort (★★★★)
Avda. Bolívar
Dumar Country Club
Tel.: 61.1667/4221
Fax: 61.4221
Services: 1,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,14
Price range: B

Margarita Hilton Internacional (★★★★★)
Playa Moreno
Tel.: 61.5822
(02) 503.5000 (Caracas)
Fax: 61.4801
Services: 1,4,5,6,7,9,10,14
Price range: A

Port L'Mar Suites (★★★★)
Calle S.
Dumar Country Club
Tel.: 61.3709/5687
Services: 1,2,7,9,10,11
Price range: B

FOLKLORIC AND RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

As a general rule, Venezuelans flock to the beaches during traditional vacation periods for Christmas, Carnival and Easter. Since this usually means traffic jams as well as overcrowded tourist facilities and less-than-ideal service, these holidays are the perfect time to visit any place except the beaches. There are many colorful Venezuelan folkloric or religious celebrations throughout the territory during these periods.

Travelers can literally bump into a celebration in progress for a patron saint in an out-of-the-way village, where fascinating processions of traditional folklore can block traffic for hours.

For a planned look at some of the country's festivals, the Christmas period, Carnival, Easter and the summer solstice (around June 22) are times of the most frenetic activity.

The list below is not exhaustive, but details the major festivals. Times give some indication of the hour when the festival is scheduled to start, though few events ever commence on time in Venezuela.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

CARNIVAL CUTIE - Children in costume are one of the major features of Carnival.

FESTIVALS

NAME	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TIME
Pastores First Sunday of December	A reenactment of the announcement of the birth of Christ to the shepherds.	Aguas Calientes (Carabobo)	Dusk
Second Saturday of December	The only Pastores festival where females may participate as dancers.	El Limón (Aragua)	Dusk
Dec. 24	Most colorful of the Pastores festivals.	San Joaquín (Carabobo) Chuao (Aragua)	After midnight Mass
Santos Inocentes Dec. 28	This commemorates the brutal killing of innocent children by Herod. Special dances are performed in honor of the children, who may dress up in costume.	Aguas Blancas (Portuguesa) Throughout the north of the country.	9 a.m. All day
Dec. 28	A large figure of a monkey is the center of attention in this festival, known as El Mono, and many people wear monkey masks.	Caicare de Maturín (Monagas)	
Dec. 28	Known as Zaragozas, this celebration signifies the payment of religious promises.	Sanare (Lara)	
Dec. 28	The Baile de los Locos features dancing males, who dress as women, making religious promises.	Quebrada (Trujillo)	
Año Viejo Dec. 31	A life-size effigy, often stuffed with fireworks, which represents the evils of the old year, is burned.	Countywide	Midnight
Feast of San Benito Dec. 27	One of the Patron saints of the blacks. His feast day is celebrated with *tambores* and maypole dancing.	Eastern Zulia from El Mojín to Gibraltar and Bobures	

NAME	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TIME
Dec. 27	The main feature of this event is the dance on the various boats.	Sinamaica	4:30 p.m.
Dec. 28		San Antonio (Zulia)	3 p.m.
Dec. 29		La Venta, Mucuchíes Timotes, (Mérida)	Noon
Jan. 1-2	This dance features a strong influence from early miners and other settlers from Trinidad.	Borbures (Zulia)	
Dec. 31 and every Sunday until Carnival		El Callao (Bolívar)	
Paradura del Niño Jan. 1 - Feb. 2	This traditional festival is prevalent in the Andes and involves stealing the baby Jesus from his creche, searching for him and celebrating when he is found.	Mérida, Trujillo, Táchira	
Reyes Magos Jan. 6	Feast of the Three Kings	Cumanacoa (Sucre), Santo Domingo (Mérida), Chuao (Aragua), Naiguatá (D.F.)	
Romería de los Pastores and Feast of the Three Kings Jan. 6	An exceptional festival featuring the *pastores* and dancers doing the rare bottle dance, *mamarrachos* (male youngsters dressed both as males and females) and the arrival of the Three Kings on horseback.	San Miguel de Boconó (Trujillo)	
El Espuntín and Maremare Jan. 7	This festival features a military-like act honoring the baby Jesus, and the re-enactment of a traditional indigenous celebration.	Caigua (Anzoátegui)	Noon
Nuestra Señora de La Candelaria Feb. 2	This very colorful ceremony is in two parts, with an all-male procession to the church, where an agrarian ceremony is re-enacted.	La Parroquia (Mérida) Turmero (Aragua) Petare (Miranda)	9 a.m.

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

DEVIL DANCE: Participants in the Diablos de Yare Festival, Estado Miranda, have a devil of a good time.

NAME	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TIME
Carnival The week before Lent		Nationwide	
Tuesday of Carnival	La Hamaca:This festival marks the end of Carnival activities with a funeral procession along a waterfront street and mourners bewailing the death of Carnival, whose "corpse" is carried and buried in a hammock.	San Millán or Puerto Cabello (Carabobo)	Noon
Wednesday of Carnival	Entierro de la Sardina: Another Carnival "burial" with males dressed as grief-stricken widows, and a sardine (representing Carnival), which is buried.	Naiguatá (Distrito Federal)	2:30 p.m.
Semana Santa Moveable	Easter celebrations	Nationwide	
Palmeros Saturday before Palm Sunday		Chacao (Distrito Federal)	noon
Nazarenos Wednesday of Holy Week	Many of the faithful dress in purple robes as they join in processions with the statue of Jesus the Nazarene or visit the image in their local church.	Basílica Sta. Teresa in Caracas Cagua (Anzoátegui)	9:30 a.m.
Passion Plays Good Friday	Hundreds of costumed participants act in the passion plays.	Urea, Aguas Calientes (Táchira)	9:30 a.m.
Palm Sunday and the following week		Caripito (Monagas) La Parroquia (Mérida)	
Quema de Judas Easter Sunday	A life-size effigy is burnt to get rid of evil. The effigy originally represented Judas, but more recently it has taken on more non-religious connotations, representing political or other contemporary evils.	Valencia (Carabobo) Other parts of the country.	Dusk

Photo: Elizabeth Kline ©

ALL DOLLED UP - Año Viejo effigies, symbolic of the old year's evils, await the bonfire.

NAME	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TIME
Velorios de la Cruz de Mayo May 3 and each Saturday in May	Participants build a cross, sing, dance and play *tambores*.	This is especially popular all through the central region, particularly in coastal towns Tejerías(Aragua), Nueva Esparta, Los Llanos, Barlovento (Carabobo).	Evening
San Isidro May 15	Yokes of oxen are decorated with flowers and produce and taken to church for a special blessing to ensure a good harvest.	Tostos, Niquitao Sta. Ana, (Trujillo) and many other Andean towns.	10 a.m. 11 a.m.
Sunday closest to May 15		Tabay (Mérida)	Noon
Corpus Christi Eighth Thursday after Holy Thursday	This is celebrated by devil dancers who make solemn religious promises showing their submission to God.	Santa Fé de Yare, Naiguatá (Miranda), Patanemo (Carabobo), Cata, Cuyagua, Ocumare, Maracay (Aragua)	10 a.m.
San Juan June 24	San Juan is one of the special saints of the blacks. His feast day is celebrated with African-style drums (*tambores*) and sensual dancing.	Curiepe and other parts of Barlovento (Miranda). Borburata and other coastal towns. Yaracuy (Cojedes), Valera, (Trujillo).	At dawn and mid-morning
San Pedro/Pablo June 29	Reenactment of the story of the black slave, María, who prayed to San Pedro (St. Peter) to save her dying daughter, Rosa, promising to dance for the rest of her life on the saint's day if Rosa was saved.	Guatire, Guarenas (Miranda)	10:30 a.m. Noon
Virgen del Valle Sept. 8	Thousands come from all over the country to pay homage to the patron of the state and of fishermen.	Valle del Espiritu Santo (Nueva Esparta)	
Nuestra Señora de Coromoto	With males dressed as Cospes Indians, the conversion of the chief by the Virgin is re-enacted.	Chachopo (Mérida)	11 a.m.
La Chinita Nov. 12-18	The city takes on a holiday spirit with countless musical and sports events.	Maracaibo (Zulia)	

ESTE SIMBOLO ES IMAGEN DE INGENIERIA DE CALIDAD

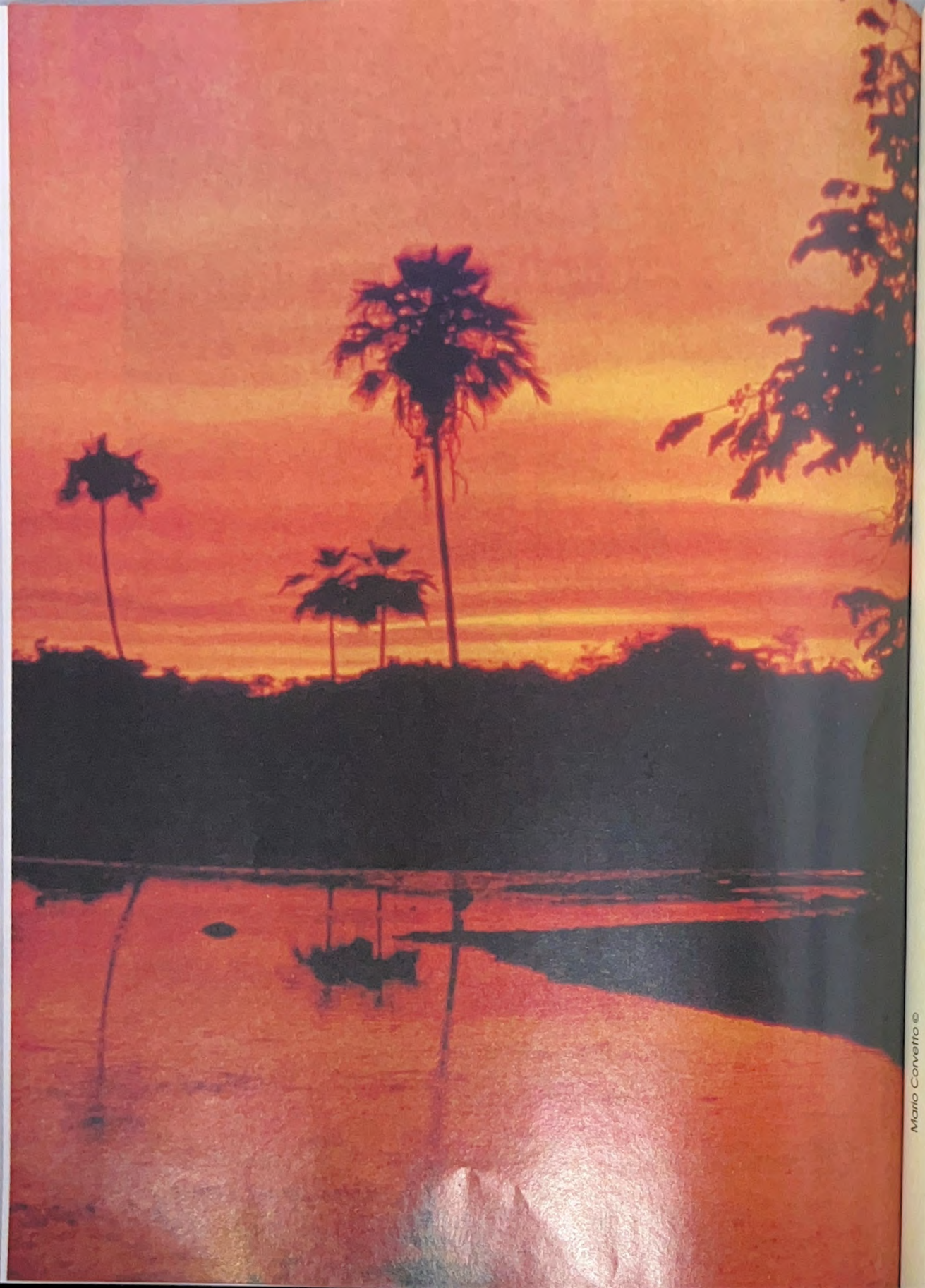
Grupo 3 / Centro de Comunicación Publicitaria

- *Porque Ud. encuentra en nosotros servicios de máxima calidad en Ingeniería, Procura, Construcción y Gerencia de Construcción, en diversos sectores como Petrolero, Químico y Petroquímico, Energético, Minero, Metalúrgico e Industrial.*
- *Porque Ud. cuenta con veinticinco años de experiencia acumulada en más de mil proyectos realizados en Venezuela y en el exterior.*
- *Porque conformamos una empresa eficiente, asociada a Fluor Daniel, en la cual aplicamos modernas técnicas gerenciales, programas de transferencia tecnológica y sistemas de control de proyectos en forma coordinada e integral , con conceptos de calidad total en la prestación de nuestros servicios.*

Estamos orgullosos de nuestro símbolo, porque representa nuestro esfuerzo para trabajar con calidad.

TECNOCONSULT TECNOFLUOR TECNOCONSULT ZULIA

Caracas: Edificio Tecnoconsult, Av. Sur Once Nº 33, Monroy a Pte. Victoria. Apartado postal Nº 50861, Caracas 1050 - Venezuela. Telex: TECON - VE. Fax: (02) 575.10.32. Teléfonos: (02) 508.21.11. (Master).
Maracaibo: Torre BHV, piso 8. Calle 73, esquina con Av. 22. Apartado postal Nº 671, Maracaibo 4001, Estado Zulia. Telex: 64291 TECMAR - VE. Fax: (061) 52.62.52. Teléfonos: (061) 52.44.48. - 52.36.45.



Mario Corvetto ©

BURNING MOMENTS - A blood-red sky marks the end of a perfect day in Portugesa state.

TELEPHONE YELLOW PAGES

The telephone yellow pages include listings for Caracas, Maracaibo and Valencia. The following reference guide of telephone numbers is compiled of members of the Venezuelan-American Chamber of Commerce (VenAmCham), in addition to recommended companies and individuals. If no specific city is identified, the agency or company is located in Caracas, area code 02. The area code for Valencia is 041; the code for Maracaibo is 061.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMBULANCE (24 HOURS A DAY)

Caracas

Aeroambulancia 91.5791, 92.6131/8980
Emergency 545.4545/2111/0622
Radio contact ..... 661.9222 (Ext. 11735)
Del Este (Altamira) 32.0251/0750, 261.7871, 31.6529/5612
Rescarven 263.1232/1398/1189
Silva (El Rosal) 33.7723, 32.7182, 31.2222

Maracaibo

Red Cross
Cruz Roja 76.742

Valencia

Atencion Inmediate 171
Emergency Medial Transport - EMI 21.1819
..... 22.7734 (Emergency)

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

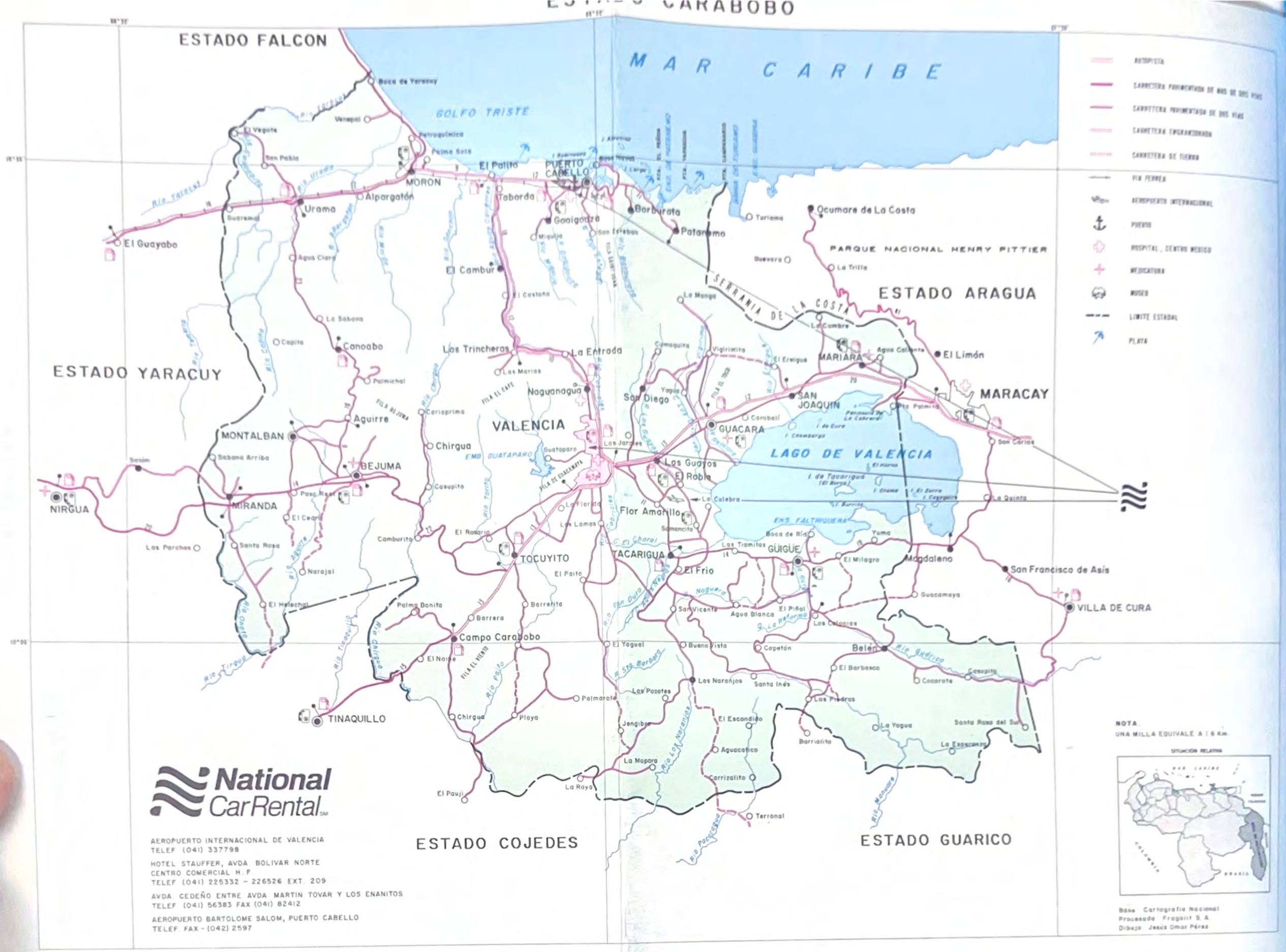
Caracas

Alcoholics Anonymous 751.8101, 752,6914
Blood Bank 81.0654/0655
CIATO (for snake bites) 662.6878
Doctors - 24 hours
Centro Móvil de Medicina Permanente 483.7021/6092, 41.2439
Drug Help Line 161
Hospital Periferico del Coche (for scorpion stings) 681.0111/1515/1717
Radio Contact 661.9222
Resurrexit - AIDS support 91.0774/1070

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Caracas

Distrito Federal 166
..... 545.2111


ESTADO CARABOBO
ESTADO FALCON
MAR CARIBE
GOLFO TRISTE
ESTADO YARACUY
ESTADO ARAGUA
PARQUE NACIONAL HENRY PITTIER
SERRANIA DE LA COSTA
VALENCIA
LAGO DE VALENCIA
MARACAY
MARIARA
SAN JOAQUIN
GUACARA
Los Guayos
El Roble
Flor Amarillo
TACARIGUA
El Frio
GUIGUE
Magdaleno
San Francisco de Asís
VILLA DE CURA
Belén
Campo Carabobo
TOCUYITO
MONTALBAN
BEJUMA
MIRANDA
NIRGUA
TINAQUILLO
MORON
PUERTO CABELLO
Urama
Alpargatón
El Guayabo
Canoabo
Aguirre
Chirgua
Las Trincheras
La Entrada
Naguanagua
San Diego
Borburata
Patanemo
Ocumare de La Costa
El Limón
Magdaleno
Los Naranjos
Santa Inés
Las Piedras
El Escondido
Aguacatico
Carrizalito
Terronal
La Mapora
Jengibre
Palmarote
Ploya
El Pauji
La Raya
Chirgua
El Noine
Barrera
Barrerita
Palma Bonita
El Helechal
Narajal
Santa Rosa
Los Parchos
Salóm
Sabana Arriba
Paso Real
El Cedro
Casupito
Cariaprima
Guatapara
Los Jarales
Los Lomas
La Florida
El Rosario
Camburito
El Palito
Taborda
Goaigoaza
El Cambur
El Castaño
Miguija
San Esteban
Cumaquita
Vigirimita
El Ereigue
La Cumbre
La Manga
Turiama
Guevara
La Trilla
Agua Caliente
Pta. Palmita
San Carlos
La Quinta
Yuma
Boca de Río
Las Tiamitas
El Milagro
Guacamaya
El Piñal
Agua Blanca
San Vicente
Las Colonias
Copetón
Buena Vista
El Yagual
Los Pozotes
El Barbasco
Cocorote
Casupito
La Yagua
Santa Rosa del Sur
La Esperanza
Barrialito
Río Yaracuy
Río Urama
Río Tinaquillo
Río Chirgua
Río Tirgua
Río Aguirre
Río Onoto
Río Paito
Río Pacaragua
Río Manuare
Río Guárico
Río Los Naranjos
Río Pan Duro
Río Cabriales
Río Torito
Río Chirgua
Río Tamaria
Río Cabrera
Río Morón
Río Sanchez
Río Aguacate
Río Mariara
Río Cabriales
Río Guacamaya
Río Guayabo
Río Urama
Río Yaracuy
Río Tinaquillo
Río Chirgua
Río Tirgua
Río Paito
Río Pacaragua
Río Manuare
Río Guárico
Río Los Naranjos
Río Pan Duro
Río Cabriales
Río Guacamaya
Río Guayabo
Río Urama
Río Yaracuy
Boca de Yaracuy
Venepal
Petroquímica
Palma Sola
El Vegote
San Pablo
Guaremal
Agua Clara
La Sabana
Capita
Palmichal
Sabana Arriba
Paso Real
El Cedro
Santa Rosa
Narajal
El Helechal
Río Onoto
Río Tirgua
Río Tinaquillo
Río Chirgua
Río Paito
Río Pacaragua
Río Manuare
Río Guárico
Río Los Naranjos
Río Pan Duro
Río Cabriales
Río Guacamaya
Río Guayabo
Río Urama
Río Yaracuy
AUTOPISTA
CARRETERA PAVIMENTADA DE MAS DE DOS VIAS
CARRETERA PAVIMENTADA DE DOS VIAS
CARRETERA ENGRANZONADA
CARRETERA DE TIERRA
VIA FERREA
AEROPUERTO INTERNACIONAL
PUERTO
HOSPITAL, CENTRO MEDICO
MEDICATURA
MUSEO
LIMITE ESTADAL
PLAYA
NOTA:
UNA MILLA EQUIVALE A 1.6 Km.
SITUACIÓN RELATIVA
MAR CARIBE
COLOMBIA
BRASIL
Base: Cartografía Nacional
Procesada: Fragolit S. A.
Dibujo: Jesús Omar Pérez
National CarRental
AEROPUERTO INTERNACIONAL DE VALENCIA
TELEF. (041) 337798
HOTEL STAUFFER, AVDA. BOLIVAR NORTE
CENTRO COMERCIAL H. F.
TELEF. (041) 225332 - 226526 EXT. 209
AVDA. CEDEÑO ENTRE AVDA. MARTIN TOVAR Y LOS ENANITOS
TELEF. (041) 56383 FAX (041) 82412
AEROPUERTO BARTOLOME SALOM, PUERTO CABELLO
TELEF. FAX - (042) 2597

ESTADO BOLIVAR

ESTADO ANZOATEGUI

T.F. DELTA AMACURO

ZONA EN RECLAMACION

T.F. AMAZONAS

BRASIL

NOTA:
UNA MILLA EQUIVALE A 1.8 Km.
Las cifras indican la distancia en kms entre dos ciudades

SITUACION RELATIVA

Base Cartografia Nacional
Procesado Fragoli S.A.

CIUDAD GUAYANA
SOLEDAD
CIUDAD BOLIVAR
UPATA
CAICARA DEL ORINOCO
TUMEREMO
Puerto Ordaz
El Burro
Tabaca Cardona
La Urbana
Quirabo
Mariapa
Los Barrancos
Las Trincheras
Ciudad Piar
El Pegote
San Francisco
Pao de La Fortuna
Las Nieves
La Paragua
La Vergareña
Raudal Aripao
Raudal Guaniamo
Raudal Tolotos
Raudal Maisa
Raudal Quichi
Raudal Uasi
Salto Hacha
Salto Urimasa
Salto Pará
Chorro Mara Salto Angel
El Manaco
Puerto Brisas
El Callao
El Dorado
La Reforma
Las Claritas
Icabaru
Santa Elena de Uairén
Canaracuni
Parcelas
Rochoela
El Palmar
El Manaco
Km 88
Km 147
Km 64

AUTOPISTA
CARRETERA PAVIMENTADA DE MAS DE DOS VIAS
CARRETERA PAVIMENTADA DE DOS VIAS
CARRETERA ENGRANZONADA
CARRETERA DE TIERRA
AEROPUERTO INTERNACIONAL
AEROPUERTO NACIONAL
PUERTO
HOSPITAL, CENTRO MEDICO
MEDICATURA
MINAS
CHALANA
COMUNIDAD INDIGENA
CUEVA
ARTESANIA
AGUAS TERMALES
SITIO HISTORICO
VIA FERREA

National Car Rental

AEROPUERTO CIUDAD GUAYANA, LOCAL NATIONAL CAR RENTAL. PUERTO ORDAZ ESTADO BOLIVAR. TELEF. (086) 51.16.55.

PUERTO ORDAZ, CALLE GUARIPE. ZONA INDUSTRIAL UNARE II. LOCAL NATIONAL CAR RENTAL. TELEF. FAX (086) 51.24.25.

AEROPUERTO CIUDAD BOLIVAR, AVDA. JESUS SOTO. LOCAL NATIONAL CAR RENTAL. TELEF. (085) 27.090.

CIUDAD BOLIVAR. AVDA. UPATA CON ANDRES BELLO. LOCAL NATIONAL CAR RENTAL. ENTRE COMERSA Y BLOQUE DE ARMAS. TELEF. FAX (085) 23.546.

ESTADO ANZOATEGUI
MAR CARIBE
ESTADO MIRANDA
ESTADO SUCRE
ESTADO MONAGAS
ESTADO GUARICO
ESTADO BOLIVAR
PTO. LA CRUZ
BARCELONA
Puerto Píritu
Píritu
Clarines
Guanape
Valle de Guanape
San José de Guaribe
Onoto
ARAGUA DE BARCELONA
ANACO
CANTAURA
San Mateo
Santa Rosa
Urica
Punta de Mata
San Antonio
Bergantín
Barbacoas
Pozuelos
Guanta
Santa Fé
Boca de Uchire
Cúpira
Río Chico
ZARAZA
TUCUPIDO
El Chaparro
Santa Ana
San Joaquín
PARIAGUAN
EL TIGRE
SAN TOME
S. José de Guanipa
Sta. María de Ipire
El Pao
Agua Clara
El Manguito
La Loma
Santa Clara
Atapirire
San Diego de Cabrutica
Zuata
Potrerito
Barrancas
Uverito
Santa Cruz de Orinoco
Boca del Pao
Moitaco
Mapire
Las Majadas
Las Bonitas
SOLEDAD
CIUDAD BOLIVAR
Pto. Ordaz
San Félix
CIUDAD GUAYANA
Río Orinoco
National CarRental
AEROPUERTO DE BARCELONA
TELEF: (081) 774119
PUERTO LA CRUZ AVENIDA MUNICIPAL
TELEF: (081) 668576 - 668934 - 667027
AEROPUERTO SAN TOME
TELEF: (083) 61185
EL TIGRE AVENIDA INTERCOMUNAL
TIGRE EL TIGRITO
TELEF: (083) 351537
ANACO CARRETERA NEGRA KM. 101
TELEF: (082) 22064
CARRETERA PAVIMENTADA DE MAS DE DOS VIAS
CARRETERA PAVIMENTADA DE DOS VIAS
CARRETERA ENGRANZONADA
CARRETERA DE TIERRA
HOSPITAL
AEROPUERTO
MUSEO
PUERTO
TERMINAL FERRY
PLAYA
NOTA.
UNA MILLA EQUIVALE A 1.6 Km.
SITUACION RELATIVA
Base: Cartografía Nacional
Procesado: Fragulit S. A.

ESTADO MERIDA

LAGO DE MARACAIBO

ESTADO ZULIA

ESTADO TRUJILLO

ESTADO BARINAS

ESTADO TACHIRA

PARQUE NACIONAL SIERRA NEVADA

Sta. Apolonia
Sabana de Mendoza
Sabana Grande
BETIJOQUE
Isnotú
Motatán
La Cejita
La Dificultad
Buena Vista
Escuque
VALERA
Gibraltar
Boburés
Arapuey
Santiago de Trujillo
Palmarito
El Batey
Nva. Bolivia
Caja Seca
La Puerta
La Quebrada
Sta. María
San Cristóbal
Jajó
Concha
Torondoy
La Mesa
S. CARLOS DEL ZULIA
Playa Grande
El Arbolito
Sta. Apolonia
Timotes
El Cantal
Pueblo Nuevo
Tucani
Chachopo
El Piñar
La Gran Parada
Pueblo LLano
Caño Blanco
Las Piedras
Sto. Domingo
Mucuro
Sta. María
Sta. Elena de Arenales
Altamira
Los Naranjos
Caño Amarillo
La Azulita
Mucuchíes
Mucurubá
La Caña
Mucujepe
El Charotal
Tabay
EL VIGIA
La Dea
MERIDA
Jají
La Punta
EVIDO
La Tendida
San Juan
Belén
Mesa Bolívar
Lagunillas
Chiguará
El Tambor
Estánquez
Pueblo Nuevo
Los Nevados
El Morro
Acequias
Sta. Cruz de Mora
San José
San Pedro
Zea
Qda. Negra
Mucundó
La Providencia
TOVAR
El Palmar
BAILADORES
El Martino
El Achote
Aricagua
El Palmar
El Cotudo
El Río
Guaraque
Mucuchachí
Sta. Cruz del Quemado
Campo Elías
LA GRITA
Libertad (Canaguá)
El Rincón
Loma Larga
Pregonero
Sta. Lucía
Guaimaral
El Guatí
Sabaneta
El Viento
Sta. María de Caparo

CARRETERA PAVIMENTADA DE MAS DE DOS VIAS
CARRETERA PAVIMENTADA DE DOS VIAS
CARRETERA ENGRANZONADA
CARRETERA DE TIERRA
CAMINO CARRETERO
HOSPITAL
MEDICATURA
PARQUE NACIONAL
ZONA DE PIC - NIC
PLAYA
AEROPUERTO
MUSEO

NOTA:
UNA MILLA EQUIVALE A 1.6 Km.

SITUACIÓN RELATIVA

Base: Cartografía Nacional
Procesado: Fragolit S.A.

National CarRental

AEROPUERTO INTERNACIONAL ALBERTO CARNEVALLI
AVENIDA URDANETA, TELEF. (074) 630722 • 635146

HOTEL LA PEDREGOSA, URB. LA PEDREGOSA SUR
TELEF. (074) 691355

HOSTERIA EL VIGIA VIA PANAMERICANA
EL VIGIA EDO. MERIDA
TELEF. (075) 88901 - 89404 - 89405

ESTADO NUEVA ESPARTA

MAR CARIBE

ENSENADA LA GUARDIA

PENINSULA DE MACANAO

ISLA CUBAGUA

ISLA COCHE

PUERTO EL GUAMACHE

RUTA DEL FERRY

RUTA DEL FERRY

Manzanillo
Aricagua
Puerta Fermín (El Tirano)
Pedro González
Paraguachí
Altagracia
La Asunción
El Salado
La Guiera
Juangriego
Santa Ana
La Vecindad
Pedregales
Los Millanes
Tacarigua
Bolívar (El Maco)
San Sebastián
Atama
Agua de Vaca
Los Fermines
Fuentidueño
San Juan Bautista
La Guardia
Los Robles
Pampatar
Puerto Moreno
El Valle del Espíritu Santo
El Espinal
Villa Rosa
PORLAMAR
Las Bermúdez
Las Marvales
El Silguero
AEROPUERTO
El Yaque
La Isleta
Punta de Piedras
El Guamache
Robledal
El Tunal
San Francisco
El Saco
Boca de Pozo
Punta Arenas
Chacachacare
Boca de Río
Los Gómez
Mata Redonda
Guayacancito
Barrancas
Curichicual
Las Cabezas
Güinima
El Guamache
San Pedro de Coche
El Bichar

PLAYA EL TUNAL
PLAYA LA RUTAMA
PLAYA LA PARED
PLAYA ROBLEDAL
PLAYA PUNTA ARENAS
PLAYA BOCA DE RIO
PLAYA LAGUNA DE RAYA
PLAYA LA RESTINGA
PLAYA LA GUARDIA
PLAYA LA CARRETA
PLAYA EL AGUA
PLAYA EL MORRO
PLAYA LA GALERA
PLAYA EL YAQUE
PLAYA LOS ALGODONES
PLAYA PUNTA DE MANGLE
PUNTA DE TIGRE
PUNTA EL MARIOT
BAHIA DE MANGLE
BAHIA GUAMACHE
BAHIA DE JUANGRIEGO
LAGUNA LAS MARITES
CERRO EL COPEY
CERRO MATASIETE
CERRO EL PARAGUACHI
CERRO EL COPEY
TETAS DE MARIA SUEVARA

VIAS PRINCIPALES
VIAS SECUNDARIAS
VIAS DE TIERRA
HOSPITAL
MEDICATURA
PARQUE NACIONAL
MONUMENTO NATURAL
TERMINAL FERRY
PUERTO INTERNACIONAL

NOTA
UNA MILLA EQUIVALE A 1.6 Km.

SITUACION RELATIVA

Base: Cartografía Nacional
Procesado: Fragolit S.A.

National

HOTEL LAKE PLAZA
Teléfonos:(095) 61.06.11 - 61.04.09

HOTEL HILTON
Teléfonos: (095) 62.23.55 - 61.58.22

MARGARITA AUTOPISTA
Teléfonos: (095) 69.13.11/12 - 69.14.11

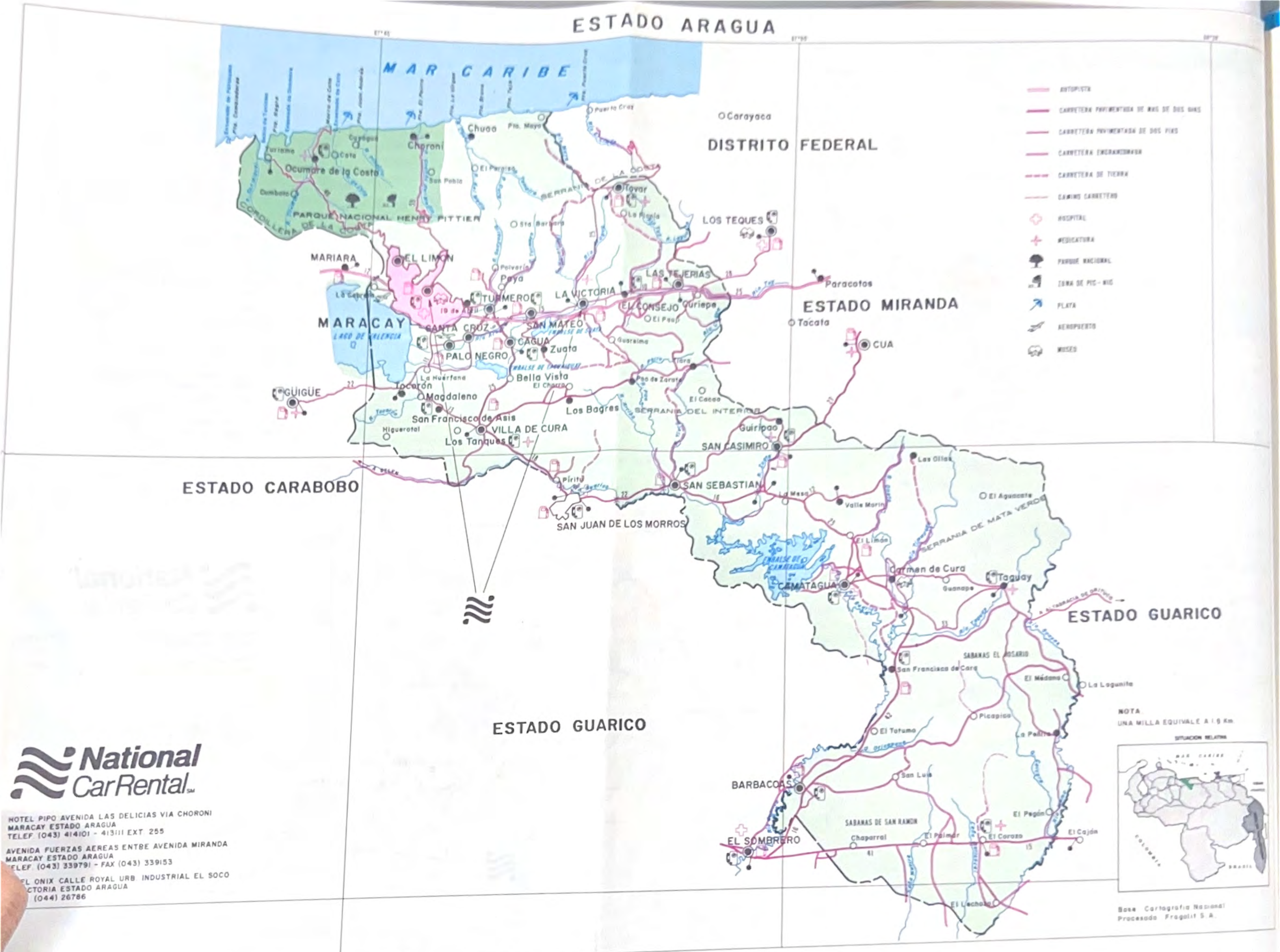
HOTEL FLAMINGO BEACH
Teléfonos. (095) 62.48.22 - 62.47.50

PORLAMAR
Teléfonos: (095) 61.44.90 - Fax (095) 61.45.23

AEROPUERTO INTERNACIONAL SANTIAGO MARIÑO
Teléfonos: (095) 69.11.71 - 69.14.17

HOTEL CONCORDE
Teléfonos: (095) 61.66.76 Ext. 5329 (61.33.33)

HOTEL PLAYA EL AGUA BEACH RESORT
Teléfonos: (095) 48.737 / 648

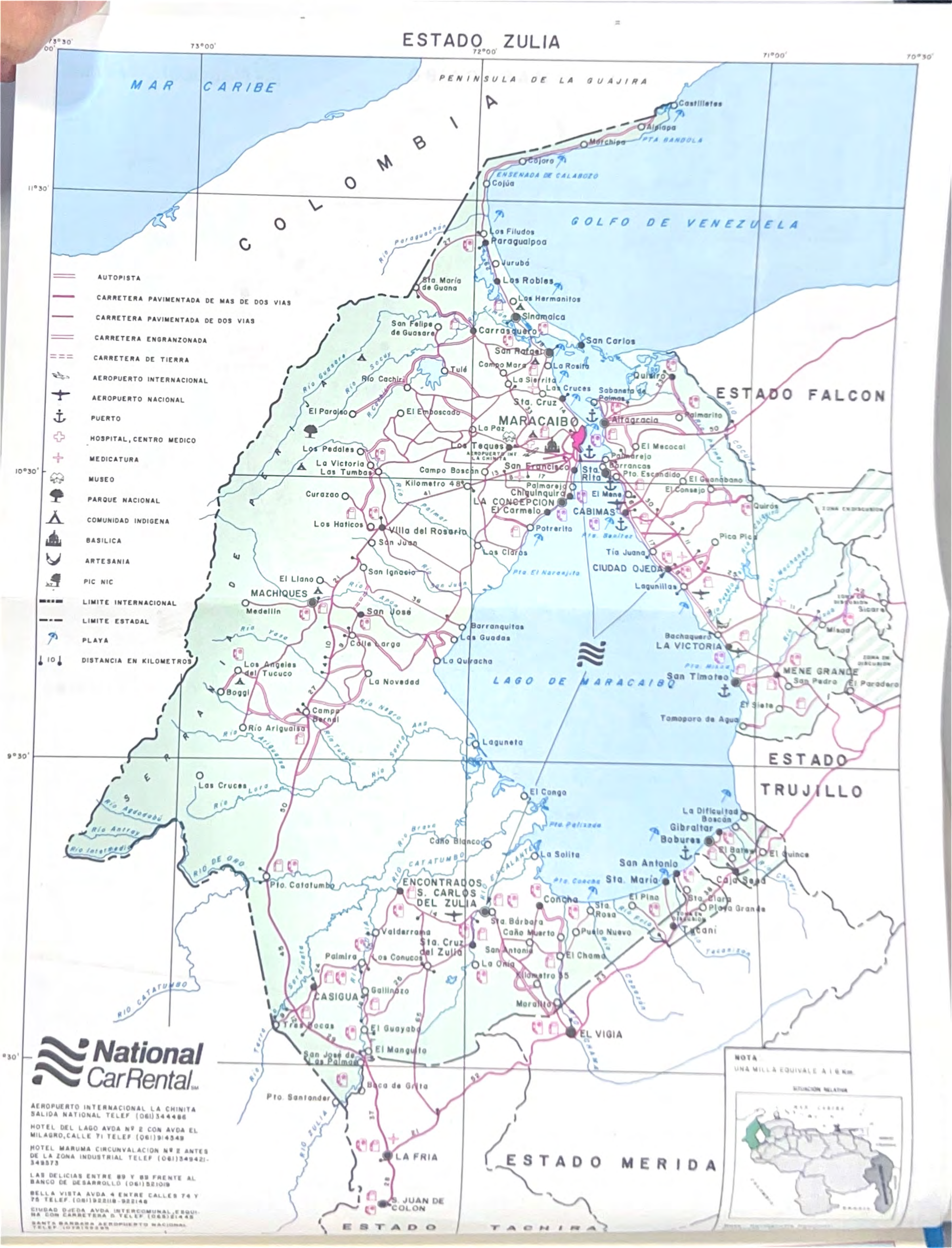


National Car Rental

HOTEL PIPO AVENIDA LAS DELICIAS VIA CHORONI
MARACAY ESTADO ARAGUA
TELEF. (043) 414101 - 413111 EXT. 255

AVENIDA FUERZAS AEREAS ENTRE AVENIDA MIRANDA
MARACAY ESTADO ARAGUA
TELEF. (043) 339791 - FAX (043) 339153

EL ONIX CALLE ROYAL URB. INDUSTRIAL EL SOCO
CTORIA ESTADO ARAGUA
(044) 26786


ESTADO ZULIA
MAR CARIBE
PENINSULA DE LA GUAJIRA
COLOMBIA
GOLFO DE VENEZUELA
ESTADO FALCON
ESTADO TRUJILLO
ESTADO MERIDA
ESTADO TACHIRA
LAGO DE MARACAIBO
SERRANIA DE PERIJA
MARACAIBO
CABIMAS
CIUDAD OJEDA
LA CONCEPCION
MACHIQUES
LA VICTORIA
MENE GRANDE
ENCONTRADOS
S. CARLOS DEL ZULIA
CASIGUA
EL VIGIA
LA FRIA
S. JUAN DE COLON
Castilletes
Alpiapa
Morchipa
PTA. BANDOLA
Cojoro
ENSENADA DE CALABOZO
Cojúa
Los Filudos
Paraguaipoa
Jurubá
Los Robles
Los Hermanitos
Sinamaica
Sta. María de Guana
San Felipe de Guasare
Carrasquero
San Carlos
San Rafael
Campo Mara
La Rosita
La Sierrita
Las Cruces
Sta. Cruz
Sabaneta de Palmas
Quisiro
Palmarito
Altagracia
El Mecocal
Palmarejo
Barrancas
Pto. Escondido
El Guanábano
El Consejo
Quirós
Pica Pica
Tía Juana
Lagunillas
Bachaquero
San Timoteo
San Pedro
El Paradero
El Siete
Tomoporo de Agua
Sicare
Misoa
Tulé
Río Cachiri
El Paraíso
El Emboscado
La Paz
Los Teques
AEROPUERTO INT. LA CHINITA
Los Pedales
La Victoria
Las Tumbas
Campo Boscán
San Francisco
Sta. Rita
Kilometro 48
Palmarejo
Chiquinquirá
El Mene
El Carmelo
Curazao
Los Haticos
Villa del Rosario
San Juan
Potrerito
Los Claros
Pta. Benítez
Pta. El Naranjito
San Ignacio
El Llano
Medellín
San José
Barranquitas
Las Guadas
Calle Larga
La Quiracha
Los Angeles del Tucuco
La Novedad
Boggi
Campo Bernal
Río Ariguaisa
Laguneta
Las Cruces
El Congo
Pta. Palizada
Caño Blanco
La Solita
Pto. Catatumbo
Valderrama
Sta. Cruz del Zulia
Palmira
Los Conucos
Concha
Sta. Bárbara
Caño Muerto
San Antonio
La Onia
Sta. Rosa
Puelo Nuevo
El Chamo
Kilometro 35
Moralito
Gallinazo
Tres Bocas
El Guayabo
El Manguito
San José de Las Palmas
Boca de Grita
Pto. Santander
La Dificultad
Boscán
Gibraltar
Bobures
El Batey
El Quince
San Antonio
Sta. María
Caja Seca
El Pino
Sta. Clara
Playa Grande
Tucani
Río Paraguachón
Río Guasare
Río Socuy
Río Palmar
Río Apón
Río Yasa
Río Negro
Río Santa Ana
Río Tucuco
Río Ariguaisa
Río Lora
Río Agdodabú
Río Antray
Río Intermedio
RIO DE ORO
RIO CATATUMBO
RIO ESCALANTE
RIO ZULIA
Río Tarra
Río Sardinata
Río Chama
Río Tucanizan
Río Pueblo
Río Mochango
Río Chiquito
Río Chiguiri
Río Palmar
Río Cocuina
Río Limón
Río Paraguachón
AUTOPISTA
CARRETERA PAVIMENTADA DE MAS DE DOS VIAS
CARRETERA PAVIMENTADA DE DOS VIAS
CARRETERA ENGRANZONADA
CARRETERA DE TIERRA
AEROPUERTO INTERNACIONAL
AEROPUERTO NACIONAL
PUERTO
HOSPITAL, CENTRO MEDICO
MEDICATURA
MUSEO
PARQUE NACIONAL
COMUNIDAD INDIGENA
BASILICA
ARTESANIA
PIC NIC
LIMITE INTERNACIONAL
LIMITE ESTADAL
PLAYA
DISTANCIA EN KILOMETROS
73°30'
73°00'
72°00'
71°00'
70°30'
11°30'
10°30'
9°30'
NOTA
UNA MILLA EQUIVALE A 1.6 Km.
SITUACION RELATIVA
National Car Rental
AEROPUERTO INTERNACIONAL LA CHINITA SALIDA NATIONAL TELEF (061)344486
HOTEL DEL LAGO AVDA Nº 2 CON AVDA EL MILAGRO, CALLE 71 TELEF (061)914549
HOTEL MARUMA CIRCUNVALACION Nº 2 ANTES DE LA ZONA INDUSTRIAL TELEF (061)349421-349573
LAS DELICIAS ENTRE 89 Y 89 FRENTE AL BANCO DE DESARROLLO (061)521019
BELLA VISTA AVDA 4 ENTRE CALLES 74 Y 75 TELEF. (061)922118-922148
CIUDAD OJEDA AVDA INTERCOMUNAL, ESQUINA CON CARRETERA D TELEF (065)21445
SANTA BARBARA AEROPUERTO NACIONAL

ESTADO MIRANDA

NOTA:
UNA MILLA EQUIVALE A 1.6 Km.
26 Los cifras indican la distancia en kms. entre dos simbolos 29

SITUACIÓN RELATIVA

Base: Cartografia Nacional
Procesado: Fragolit S. A.

67.00'
66.30'
66.00'
65.30'
10° 30'
10° 00'

M A R C A R I B E

DISTRITO FEDERAL
PARQUE NACIONAL EL AVILA

ESTADO ARAGUA

ESTADO GUARICO

ESTADO ANZOA

PARQUE NACIONAL GUATOPO

PARQUE NACIONAL LAGUNA DE TACARIGUA

CATIA LA MAR
Playa Grande
Naiguata
Caraballeda
Macuto
La Guaira
Maiquetia
Caracas
Santa Cristo
Los Planades
Corupao
Guatire
Petare
Guarenas
Araira
El Junquito
Macarao
Las Adjuntas
Cariguao
Baruta
El Hatillo
Sabaneta Arriba
Tovar
Embalse de Agua Fria
El Jarillo
San Pedro
San Antonio de Los Altos
Turgua
Los Teques
Cocorote
Guaregüare
Paracotos
Las Tejerias
Taiza
Charallave
Santa Lucia
Santa Rita
Santa Teresa
El Salado
Tacata
Cua
San Francisco de Yare
Ocumare del Tuy
Aniegos
Los Dolores
Los Barros
Boca De Onza
Campo Verde
Los Cajones
San Casimiro
La Democracia
Rio de Piedra
Guatopo
Araguita
Caucagua
El Milagro
Caño Negro
Tapipa
Panaquire
Clavo
Rio Negro
La Libertad
Mamporal
Tacarigua de Mamporal
Higuerote
Curiepe
Birongo
Capaya
El Solmerón
Boca Vieja
Boca Del Tuy
Paparo
Playa Paparo
Valle de La Cruz
Puerto Tuy
Rio Chico
San José de Rio Chico
Tacarigua de La Laguna
Las Lagunas
Corozal
El Guapo
San Ignacio
Palmarito
Cúpira
Machurucuto
Carenero
Bahia de Buche
Puerta Trasera
Cabo Codera
Punta Casotenos
Pta. Guaiguacara
Pta. Los Indios
Pta. de Mascapio
Chuspa
Charamena
Osma
Tadeyana
El Cojo
Los Caracas
Camuri Grande
Anare
Mare

LEYENDA

- AUTOPISTA
- CARRETERA PAVIMENTADA DE MAS DE DOS VIAS
- CARRETERA PAVIMENTADA DE DOS VIAS
- CARRETERA ENGRANZONADA
- CARRETERA DE TIERRA
- AEROPUERTO INTERNACIONAL
- AEROPUERTO NACIONAL
- PUERTO
- HOSPITAL, CENTRO MEDICO
- MEDICATURA
- PARQUE NACIONAL
- PIC NIC
- PLAYA
- LIMITE ESTADAL
- VELA
- SURFING
- TELEFERICO

National CarRental℠
C.C. LA CASONA Km. 16 CARRETERA PANAMERICANA
TELEF. (036) 6619222 - CLAVE 11838
AEROPUERTO CARACAS, CHARALLAVE
TELEF. (02) 52.17.21 - 52.16.54.

Call the U.S.

AT&T **USADirect**® Service puts you in touch with an AT&T Operator in the States.

AT&T | CANTV

For more information, in Venezuela, call us at: (02) 285.0622 - 209.8511.